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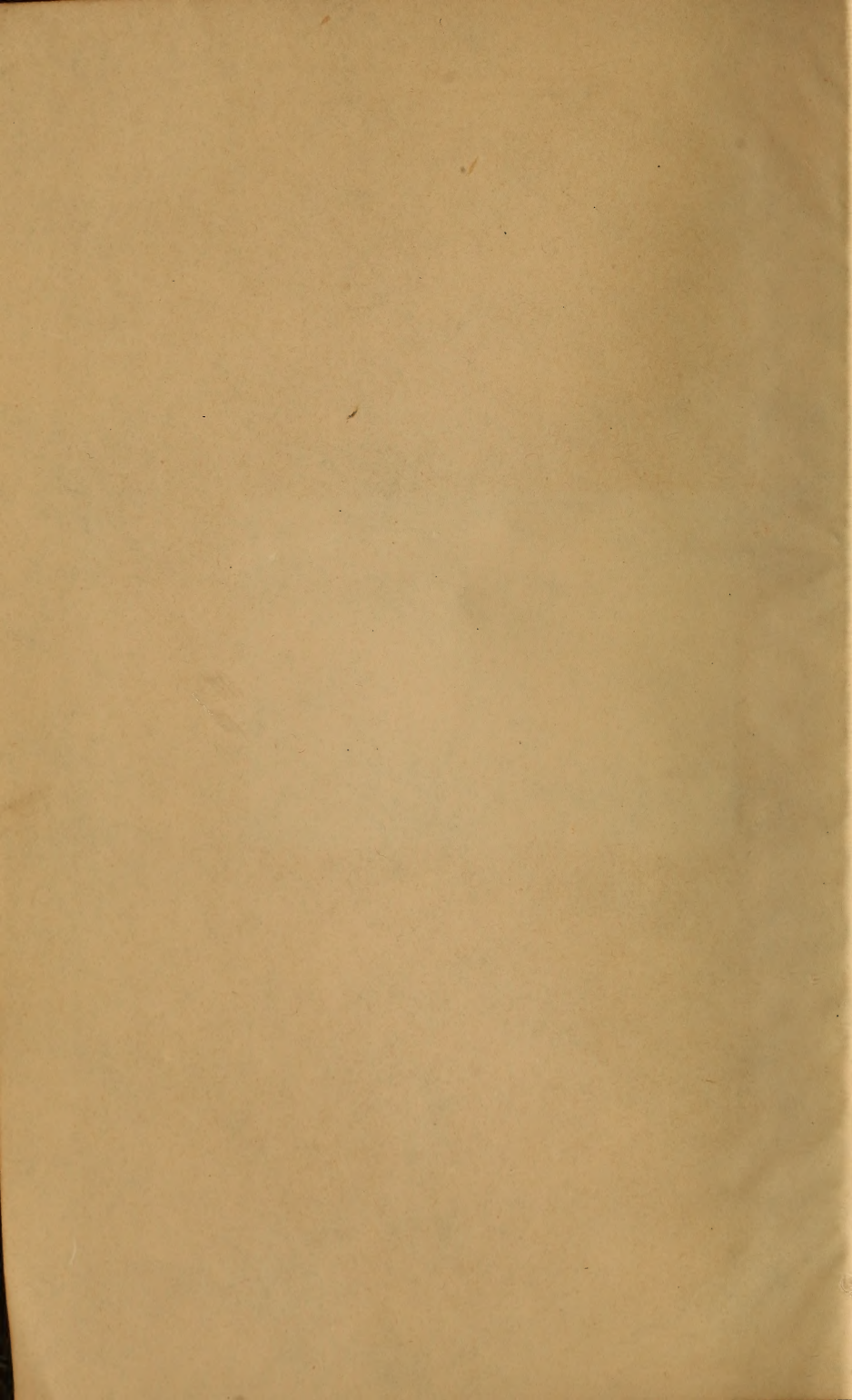
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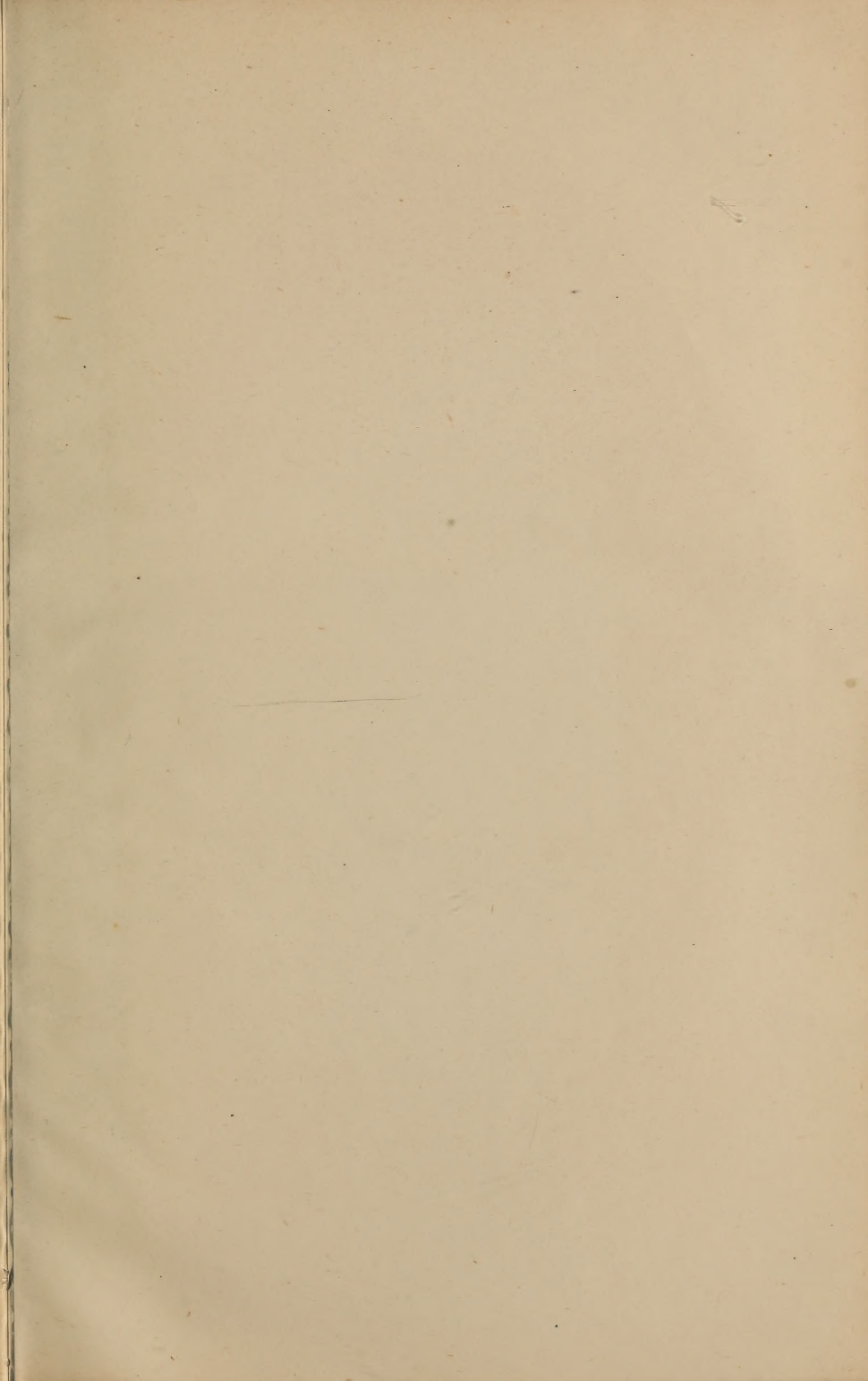
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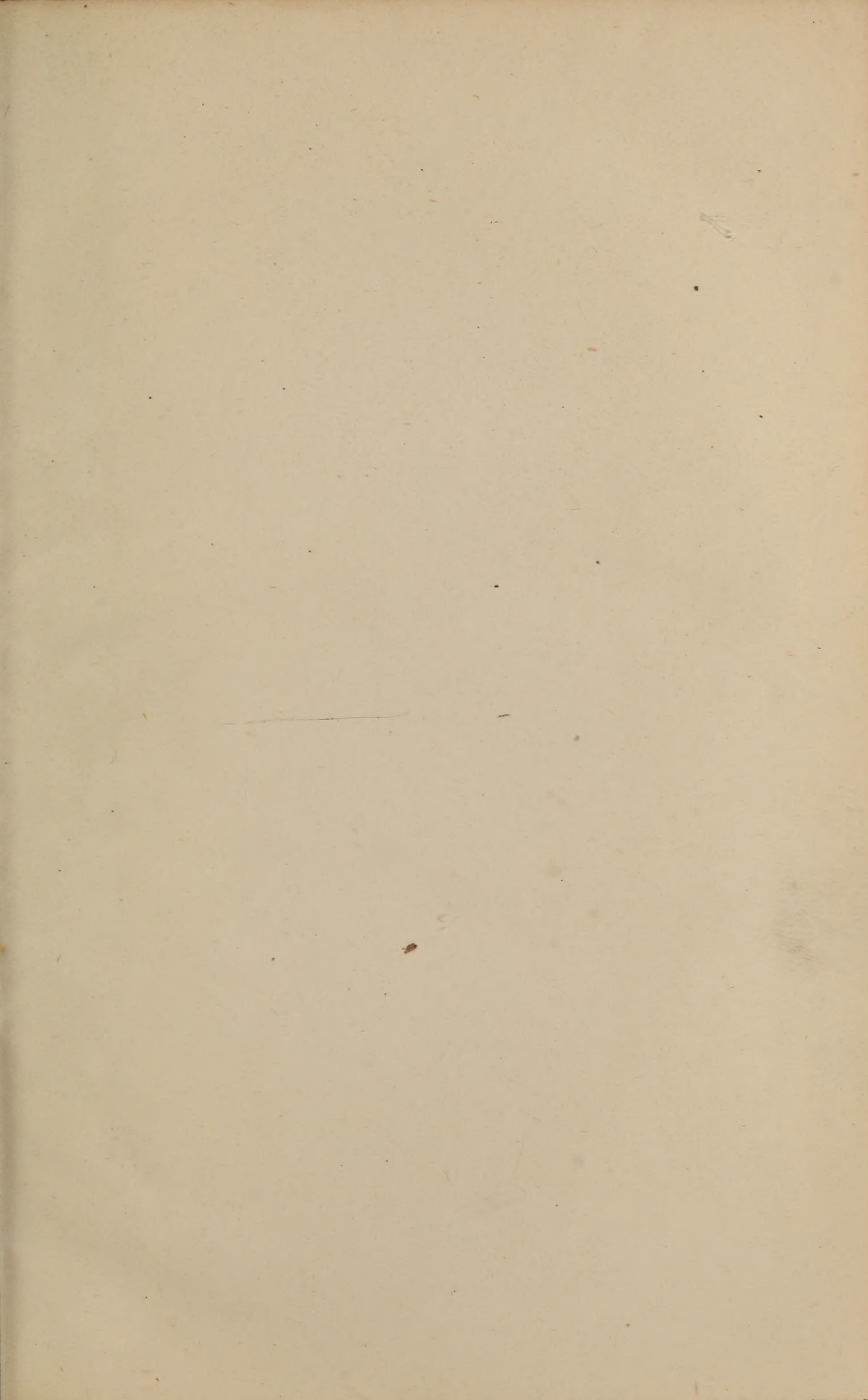
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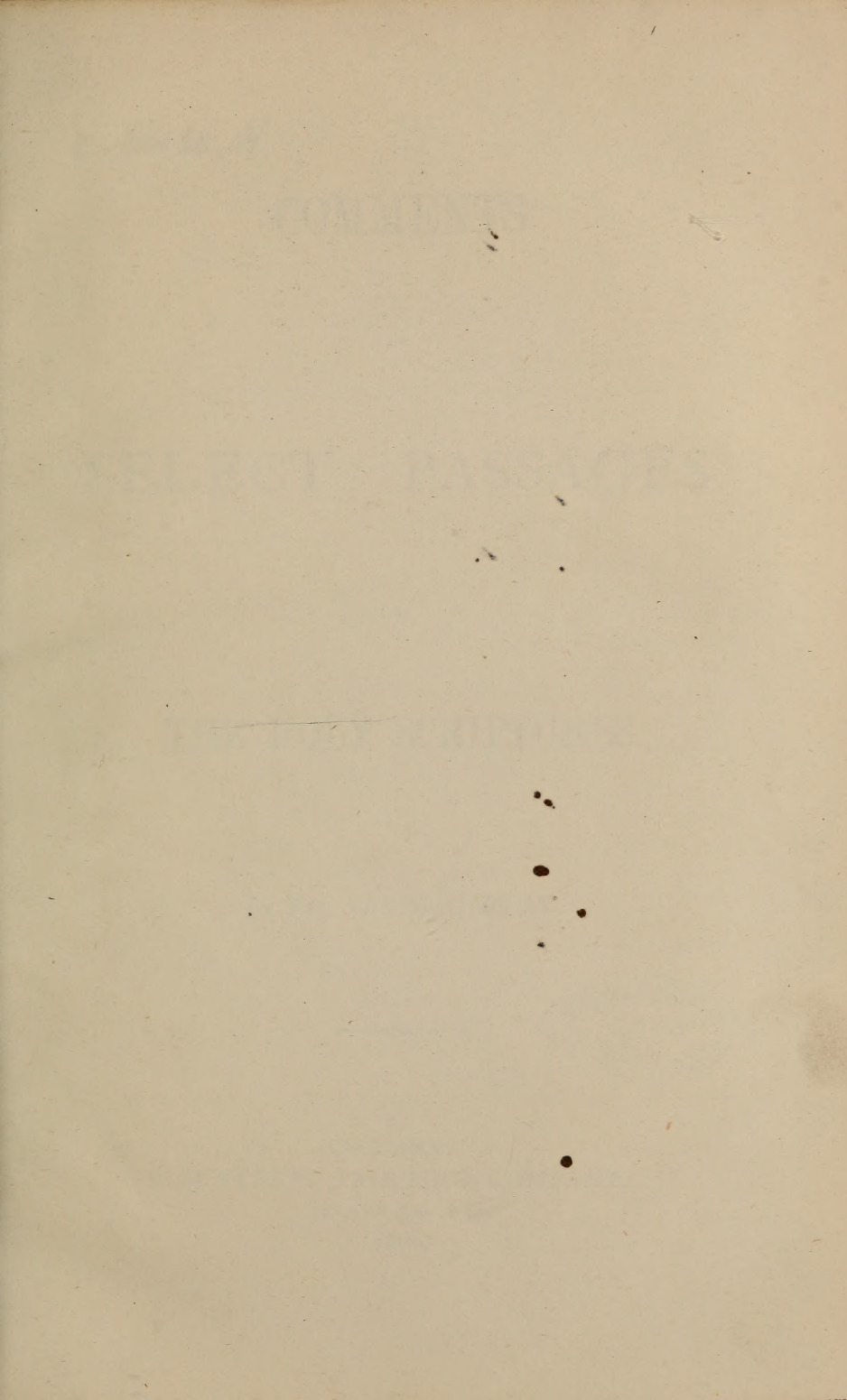
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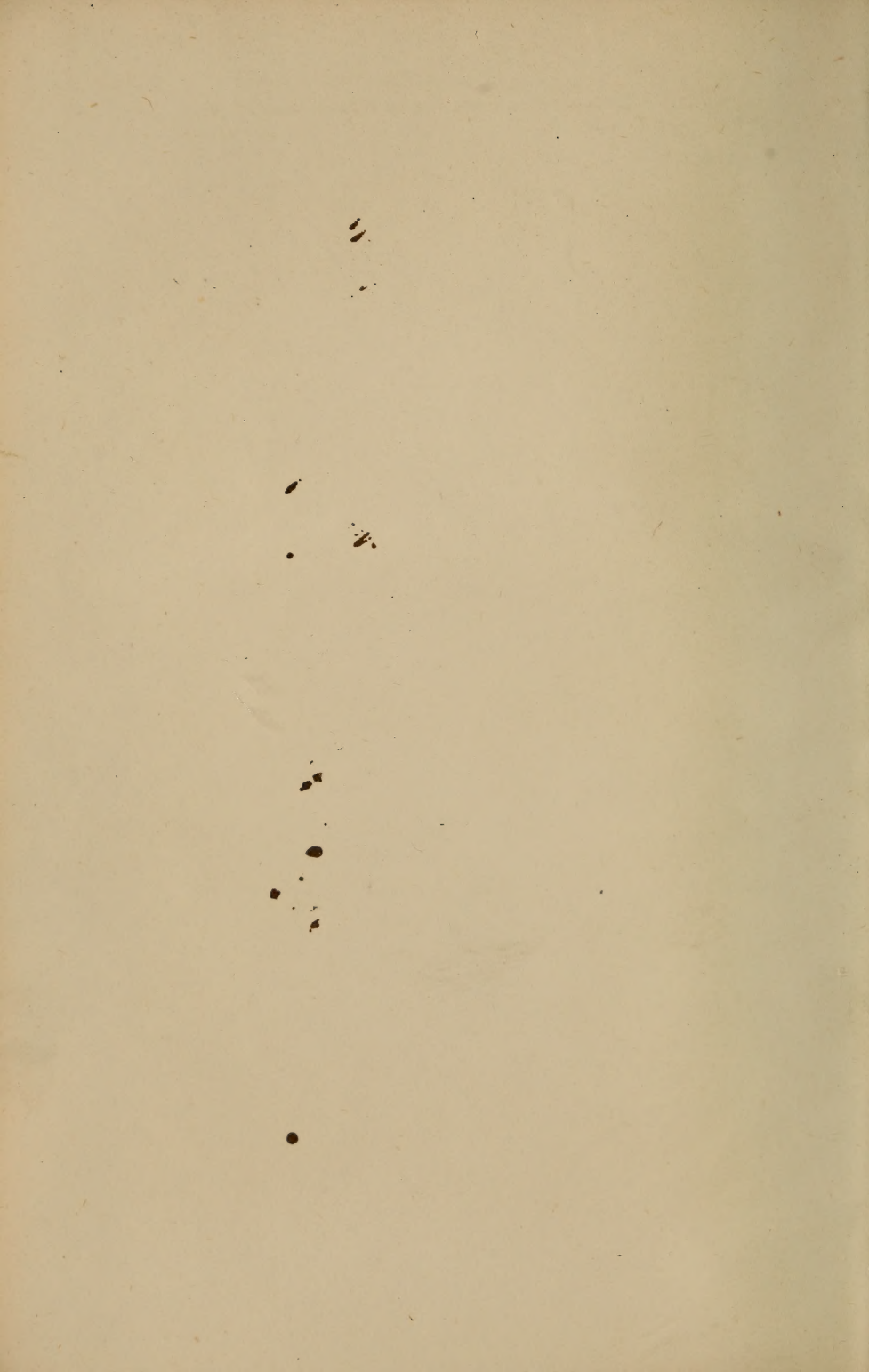
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COMMENTS

ON

SELECT PASSAGES

OF

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

By REV. SAYRS GAZLAY.



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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH commentaries are numerous, yet there is room for a supplementary one to supply deficiencies and correct errors. Some passages of revelation the translators could not render, because they did not know the meaning of them, such as Gen. iv. 1, 26. John iii. 6. Rom. ix. 3. Some passages they have heedlessly misrendered, as Exod. xxii. 12. 1 Kings ii. 9. 1 Sam. xxv. 31. Acts viii. 38; xx. 28. Rev. xvii. 8. There are hundreds of passages to which justice has not been done—and truth suffers.

If it seem late in the day to find new truths in revelation, let it be remembered that, although they are not properly new, yet by desuetude they have become as new. When Luther undertook the Reformation his means were to revive old truths which Antichrist had lain and buried.

And his impediment was the spirit of Antichrist which led and controlled the majority of men. To others his access was easy and abundant: few love the truth. The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved. John i. 5; iii. 20. But to those who do love it, its discovery is easy. If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine. John vii. 17. See also, Isa. xxxv. 8. Matt. xxiv. 24. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Man's evil heart is in the way of his receiving truth. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he can not deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand? Isa. xlv. 20.

Many err by uniting and confounding politics with their religion, as did the General Assembly at Rochester, New York. They understand not, "My kingdom is not of this world." John xviii. 36. Antichristian fanatics can not know the truth. Dan. xii. 10. 1 Cor. ii. 14. They will not consider that although slavery be mentioned so frequently in revelation it is never once censured; and it has always existed with approbation in the church. Its principle is recognized in the family of Adam. Gen. iv. 7; xvi. 9; xxvii. 37; xx. 14. Its principle is in the law of our fallen nature. Servitude is the law of God for children, for captives, for the younger brethren, for those bought with money. This law is plainly revealed; but Antichrist

presumptuously disregards it. The carnal mind is always the same: it is the same to-day, that it was when the Lord said in the parable, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Luke xvi. 31. Rom. viii. 7; xiii. 1-5. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Thus it was when the unbelieving papists resisted the plain truth taught by Luther. And thus to this day the ranks of perishing unbelievers are kept full.

If, in these comments, the simplicity of evangelical truth is maintained, it will meet with the same rejection that truth has always met with: the ungodly must fill their cup.

Yet the labor will not be in vain: the humble will gladly receive the light; and will bless God for it. While the Scriptures are generally too plain to need explanation, there are many that are difficult. These more difficult passages seem to be the only ones that require exegesis. "The whole have no need of a physician." Matt. ix. 12.

It is written, "That ye break every yoke; and let the oppressed go free." Isa. lviii. 6. It is plain that "every yoke" is to be restricted to cases of oppression, as holding a Hebrew more than six years without his consent. Holding him six years was not oppression; for God's law authorized it. Holding a Hebrew's daughter perpetually was not oppression. Exod. xxi. 7. To hold father, mother and children in perpetual servitude, in given cases, was not oppression. Exod. xxi. 6. Lev. xxv. 44, 45, 46. If every yoke literally must be broken, then the marital yoke, the parental yoke, the servile yoke, and the ox yoke, must be broken. So easily may the meaning of revelation be known.

It is easy to see how one false principle of exegesis leads to blasphemy. To call yokes oppression, when they are authorized of God, is to blaspheme him who has authorized them. 1 Tim. vi. 1. So when John Wesley denied the doctrine of election, he took the first step in blasphemy. The second step was natural and easy: which was, that "the doctrine of election, predestination, or preterition, makes the character of God worse than the devil, more false, more hypocritical, and more unjust." *Wesley's Works*.

Unbelief destroys the soul. John iii. 18-21. Isa. viii. 20. 1 Tim. vi. 1-5. One heretical dogma may so pervert the intellect and harden the heart as to prevent faith, and destroy the soul. A poor sinner can not be too careful in avoiding erroneous dogmas, or repudiating them when they have been imbibed.

And here lies one of his greatest dangers, and of his greatest difficulties. One who does not love God is unwilling to forsake his party,

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give up his creed for the sake of truth, to pluck out his eye, or cut off his hand to follow Christ. He is unwilling to have his errors corrected, and poison taken from his lips. He is wise in his own conceit; and will not let his friend, who loves his soul, correct him. What is not in agreement with his preconceived opinions he thinks must be error. He has not the wisdom nor the candor to reflect that to instruct him one must teach him something that he did not know; for how else can any one be instructed? He must know his ignorance in order to emerge from it, as the apostle says, "Become a fool that he may be wise." 1 Cor. iii. 18. He who is too full of self-conceit to be taught must perish in darkness. There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end is death. Thus the Antediluvians perished refusing the teaching of Noah. And thus Sodom perished refusing the warnings of Lot. And thus the teaching of the prophets was rejected, and poor unbelieving sinners perished.

Thus Christ, the Lord of glory, was rejected and slain for teaching the truth, which the wicked can not endure. They hate the light, and come not to it, nor will they let it come to them.

There are some who know the truth and faithfully teach it, even seven thousand who have not bowed to Baal. 1 Kings xix. 18.

Teaching the truth is not in vain: it will promote the kingdom of God, and the salvation of souls: for God's word shall not return to him void. Isa. lv. 11.

It also illustrates and shows what men's hearts are, that by their fruits they may be known. Isa. xlix. 5, 6, 7. Matt. xii. 33. Moses had to preach the truth to Pharaoh, although he knew that he would not receive it; that Pharaoh might show his character, and be fitted for his judgment. Exod. vii. 4. Isa. lv. 11.

Truth must be taught for the honor and glory of God, and for the comforting, enlightening and saving souls; and for development of the hearts and character of the wicked to show their fitness for judgment.

A Christian may know the truth, may know that he is right. See Ps. cxix. 97-100. John vii. 17; xvii. 17.

If inscrutable mystery shrouds many passages in revelation, others may be known, as it is written, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." But the wise shall understand. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and it shall be given him." Jas. i. 5. If the doctrinal and practical parts of revelation could not be known and understood, then their utility could not be developed. But the literal meaning of the words

often is not what is revealed. But what the Holy Spirit intended to teach by these words, is what is revealed. John vii. 38. Matt. xxvi. 26. We must search for the meaning, and dig as for hidden treasure. The very words are often metaphorical; and what is meant is to be learned—the very spirit of them: for the letter killeth; but the Spirit giveth life. If we take the words alone, and not find out their meaning, we may destroy ourselves. “He that believeth shall be saved.” John v. 24. We may believe these words and perish in presumption. Rom. x. 10. Jas. ii. 19.

It is proposed that this be the commencement of a new era in Biblical criticism. Henceforth let no commentator offer conjecture, or imagination for truth; nor offer anything but what he has ascertained to be true. What is the chaff to the wheat? And if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle? Everlasting divine truth is too sacred to be put off with conjectures and dreams of the imagination. Let the commentator withhold his exegesis until he knows what it should be, lest he should falsify the divine word: for the Sacred Scriptures are everlasting truth, and should not be daubed by man’s conjectures and carnal imaginations, after the fashion of Olshausen. The commentator that offers false fire upon the altar has a dire accountability to render.

He may give only what he knows to be the sense—what the Spirit meant to teach; and only that. Neh. viii. 8. Mal. ii. 7. Isa. lix. 3. Deut. xiii. 5.

Thus only can we hope to obey the divine injunction: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. i. 10; xi. 19. Phil. iii. 16; ii. 2. Rom. xii. 16; i. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 8. John viii. 32.

GENESIS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. In the beginning.

The difficulties and uncertainty which seem to surround this programme of creation—this announcement of the work—have resulted from inattention, and from the employment of imagination, instead of legitimate criticism.

The subject of revelation is not the globe itself, nor the vast works of creation; but simply the creation of this dynasty. This is shown in the Mosaic account itself; for the account of creation contains nothing besides the constituents of this dynasty, and makes no mention of the globe itself, nor of the angels, nor of the fixed stars, which, not being included in the narrative, were not included in the work of the six days.

This is taught in the first verse of the next chapter, where it is affirmed, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them." So also ii. 4.

As the creation of our dynasty was the subject of the inspired writer, we can easily interpret the word beginning. It was the beginning of this dynasty—the beginning of these six days' works—the beginning of the historic period. Whatever creations or works may have occurred before are neither mentioned nor alluded to. If the geologist sees the evidence of former dynasties in the globe, we can not impeach that evidence: for the narrative of Moses refers only to this dynasty. This is made evident by verses 8 and 10, in which the inspired writer defines the terms heaven and earth which are used in the first verse. And we are thereby precluded from taking them in any other sense.

2. And the earth was without form, and void.

This could not have meant the globe was without a spherical form, and void of material substance; for neither could be true. But both are true of the dry land, the materials of which were not as yet formed into dry land; as such land it was without form, and void—without existence as dry land.

And darkness was upon the face of the deep—the sun not being yet created, darkness prevailed. This darkness was not caused by intervening clouds obscuring the sun; for, as the atmosphere was not yet created, there were no clouds in the heavens; and, as the sun was not yet created, it could not be obscured.

3. And God said, Let there be light.

This production of light, on the first day, does not seem to have been for vision, as there was no eye created; but it was necessary for the calendar and for vegetation.

4. And God divided the light from the darkness.

The light was not disseminated over the whole face of the globe; but was separated from the darkness, and confined to one hemisphere, like a cloud; so that the globe revolving on her axis as now, there would be twelve hours of darkness and twelve of light, thus constituting a day of twenty-four hours, as at present. As the darkness preceded the light it was natural to say, And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6. And God said, Let there be a firmament.

This firmament was the atmosphere, which is of a density sufficient to sustain the smoke and mists of evaporations from the earth and waters.

8. And God called the firmament heaven (*emim*).

Thus the word heavens, in the first verse, is defined and limited. To give this word any other signification, in the first verse, is to disrespect divine authority.

This also enables us to ascertain the meaning of the word beginning, in the first verse; for as the narrative relates to this dynasty—the creations specified in detail as occupying the six days constituted the commencement, the beginning, the origin of this dynasty; as if it had been written, The beginning, the origin of this dynasty, was thus, or as follows.

9. And God said, Let the waters under the whole heaven be gathered unto one place.

That is, let the waters and the dry land be separated, each to its own place.

10. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters called he seas.

The dry land was called earth, it being one of the productions of the six days, and so extensive a one, it was by me-

tonymy appropriated to all the terrestrial productions, comprehending all that was not celestial. It comprehended seas, rivers, lakes, and all the collections of water, and all the fish that inhabit them; as also the birds, and animate and inanimate creatures that inhabit the land. But it does not include the globe itself, which is not included in the productions of the six days.

That all terrestrial things on the globe are comprehended under the terms, earth and dry land, is shown chap. vi. 13; in which the Lord said of mankind, I will destroy them with the earth. All the terrestrial creations on the globe were destroyed by the flood, except specimens of each, which were contained in the ark, except the fish which water would not injure.

Although God would destroy men with the earth, yet he did not destroy the globe itself. Which shows that earth and dry land did not include the globe. Chap. vii. 21-23.

11. And God said, Let the earth bring grass.

On the third day all vegetable kingdoms were created, and endowed with the attribute of reproduction. The earth was only to bear them upon its face, not produce them of its own power or efficiency. These vegetables were created by the divine hand, and reproduced afterward by the germination of seeds yielded by those first created. Those first created, both animals and vegetables, were created in maturity, and placed, the vegetables in proper positions in the earth, and animals upon it: ripe fruits being essential for the sustenance of those animals which needed them.

The vegetable kingdom having seeds in themselves, yielding germs for reproduction, teaches us the divine economy upon this point, as well in relation to animals as to vegetables.

14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven.

These lights were the sun and the moon. The creation of these lights was on the fourth day; while the existence of the globe itself was antecedent—it existed at least four days before the sun—the secondary before the primary. This is a seeming anomaly, as if the hand of Adam had been created four days before his body.

It is natural to inquire for the cause of this seeming anomaly. If modern investigations in geology show that prior dynasties have occupied this globe, and perished in succession from off it, then it appears that it had a prior existence to the creation narrated by Moses: and then its existence prior to the creation

of [the sun seems natural. If the globe existed four days at least before the sun, it was held and sustained in its place by miraculous power.

As geology shows that vegetables grew on the globe during former dynasties, it is natural to conclude that it had a former sun, was a satellite of a former central sun, was a member of a former solar system, which being abolished or broken up, this globe being reserved and removed to its present location in the heavens, was made the nucleus of this new solar system, which was completed on the fourth day, by the creation of the sun, moon, and wandering stars, or planets or comets associated with it.

The wisdom and goodness of this arrangement appear in the ground which it affords for our faith, as well as for the cultivation of science.

The subject also affords an argument for the divine authenticity of revelation. The definitions of the words heavens and earth in the eighth and tenth verses show a provision made to meet the discoveries of geology.

16. He made the stars also.

If the inspired writer were evidently narrating the origin of this dynasty, as is sufficiently shown by Gen. i. 1, 8, 10, and ii. 1, 4, it is respectful to him to believe that he does not digress from his subject in this sixteenth verse to any thing outside of this dynasty: and that he had no reference to the fixed stars; but only the wandering stars of this system, the planets and comets that belong to it.

17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven.

We are not to understand the sun, moon and wandering stars are located in the atmospheric firmament; but only that they so appear to us. Things in divine revelation are often described as they appear. When three heavenly messengers appeared to Abraham, they appeared as men; and although this is called the Lord's appearing to him, it is also said to have been three men; because they appeared as men. Gen. xviii. 1, 2. So also it is that the sun and moon stood still, because it so appeared. Josh. x. 13.

20. And God said, Let the waters bring forth.

Not that the water could cause their production; but that the waters contain them, or that they might live and grow in the waters.

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

As Jehovah has no body, nor bodily shape, these words, image and likeness, are to be understood in relation to God's moral image, and intellectual image and government. Man was to have government over the earth, but not over the globe. Which shows again what is before said of earth in v. 1. His government was to be over the things created upon the globe, which are enumerated. He had only a partial sovereignty over the works of the six days; for the location of rivers, mountains and lakes were beyond his jurisdiction.

29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

The exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not here made. From this we learn that the inspired writers do not load revelation with exceptions and limitations in every place that may seem to require them, deeming it sufficient that they are mentioned in some other place. Although it is said, I have given you for food the fruit of every tree, we know that it is to be received with limitation. This is likewise illustrated in many places. Josh. xiv. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Tim. ii. 4. Rom. x. 13; and xi. 26.

30. I have given every green herb for meat.

Although every green herb or plant is said to have been given for food; yet there were exceptions of the forbidden fruit, of unwholesome and poisonous plants. This is a rule of extensive application, that exceptions are often omitted; and are to be learned in other places. See 1 John ii. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Zech. viii. 10. Matt. x. 22. Mark i. 37; and v. 20.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

Thus all the works in the narrative were finished. The creations of the six days were the heavens and the earth; and as they consisted of a numerous variety of creatures, vegetables, animals, and creeping things, they are called a host. The terms, earth and dry land, were names for all these organiza-

tions that were terrestrial; just as all the celestial organizations were comprehended under the word heavens.

If they were finished in this manner, then they were finished in no other. The globe itself, with all its rocks, and fossils, its minerals, with all its internal constituents, is the work of an earlier period. So was the water; as no mention is made of the creation of water on any one of the six days, but of its separation from the earthy materials, and the abyss of mixed materials, it is assumed as existing at the beginning of creation; we learn that the globe itself, as well as the fixed stars, and the angels, were creations of the same divine hand at some former period or periods: and it may be millions of years earlier, but years may not be appropriate to the measure of earlier duration, it is better to say, duration equal to a million or millions of our years.

2. And on the seventh day God ended his work.

He ceased from the work of creating at the end of the sixth day. That is, he did not create anything after the sixth day. He created nothing more after he had created Eve. Thus he set an example of resting from work on the Sabbath. We are not therefore at liberty to suppose that nothing has been added to creation since the sixth day: all that constitute the vegetable and animal kingdoms of this dynasty, with all that belongs to our solar system, were finished, completed on the sixth day. If it were not so, the ground which this divine resting laid for the Sabbath is taken away.

As the inspired writer does not indulge in digressions, we apply all to this dynasty; and to nothing beyond it. If any of the fixed stars of heaven are now discontinued, and new ones created, or new worlds and new systems in other portions of space, it makes no discrepancy with what is spoken exclusively of our own system.

In the vegetable kingdoms, each species had its seed in itself for reproduction, and creation was finished before the Sabbath; the same is equally true of all the animal kingdoms, who by the law of reproduction with which they were endowed, have reproduced their kind, each one, by propagation.

3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

Both divine authority and divine example unite to sanction the observance of this holy, consecrated day. Having been thus early consecrated it is only necessary to allude to it in the fourth commandment, by saying, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. If the souls of men are not reproduced by propagation, but are new creations, then the ground of the

Sabbath is taken away, and the divine teaching is rendered nugatory. If we regard this divine teaching, the Sabbath has a sanctity which it is difficult fully to appreciate, and which sets a seal of bold, high-handed profanity upon its desecration. The man who profanely gathered sticks on this sacred day was stoned to death for his heaven-daring presumption.

The prophet Isaiah warns us to turn away our foot from treading upon the high authority which sanctifies this holy day. lviii. 13. "It is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Exod. xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12, 20.

Created and made are used here as synonymous, and do not necessarily import origination from nothing, but equally apply to creating from existing materials. Light and the firmament were created from nothing, while plants, animals and man were created of the ground, as Eve from Adam's rib. But all were equally creations.

As the reason for the sanctity of the Sabbath was God's resting from the wonderful and glorious work of creation, it must needs be of perpetual and universal obligation. Although it was subsequently incorporated with the ten commandments, it did not originate with the Mosaic ritual, nor depend upon it. Indeed all the ten commandments being moral in their nature are of perpetual obligation.

Neither is its perpetuity nor its sanctity impaired by its being carried over to the first day of the week, but rather confirmed; for it receives a new and additional authority by our Lord's finishing his greater work of atonement and humiliation, and rising from the dead on the first day. It is now called the Lord's day, and commemorates both the work of creation, and the work of redemption. If the law for the Sabbath be not repeated in the gospel, it is because it was not necessary: the example of our Lord and of his disciples being sufficient, as it is respecting the sacraments; for it is no where revealed that baptism and the Lord's Supper have come in the places of circumcision and the passover. The fact is obvious that they have come into the places of the others.

Whatever was revealed in the Old Testament is binding under the gospel, unless it be in some way abrogated, as are sacrifices and circumcision; for the moral law is unchangeable.

4. These are the generations of the heavens and earth.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

This is the origination of this dynasty, which consists of all the things that were made in the six days of creation.

Day here signifies the time or period of creation of whatever length it may have been.

The name Lord for Jehovah is used here for the first time in the Scriptures—the word was only God (*Elohim*), no other name being used; none other being deemed suitable for the period. But after the subjects of creation were introduced, and the name God (*Elohim*) being introduced as the Divine Author, it seems to have been deemed proper to introduce the name for God which had been given to Moses 2500 years later, when Israel came out of Egypt. This revelation was not written and given to Israel until they had come out of Egypt, and after the name Jehovah (commonly translated Lord in our English version) had been made known to Israel, they could understand it, and were prepared for its use. But this name for God was unknown to Israel, was unknown to every one of them, until Moses was sent to deliver them from bondage.

Wherever this name Lord (Jehovah) was used in the book of Genesis, as verses 6, 8, and xxvii. 20, 27, it was in like manner used by anticipation as to the subject, for it was an anachronism as to the events recorded, not ever being used by Isaac nor heard by him as a divine name; although it was in common use as a word in the language, in its original grammatical sense.

5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth.

The plants and trees were created in maturity, with their fruit in maturity upon them according to the season. If it were not in season for fruit as to some of them, they had bloom or young fruit upon them, growing to be matured in season. Else Adam and Eve, and the lower animals, had been unsupplied if they had been obliged to fast until the grass, the herbs, and the trees had grown out of the ground. As Adam and Eve had been created in maturity, so was the vegetable kingdom created in maturity.

But there was not a man to till the ground.

Here also is what has seemed to be an anachronism, and has perplexed many; as the creation of man is expressly stated in the first chapter. But there need be no such perplexity, because Moses is repeating the history of man's creation, and takes up the narrative again to give a more full account of it,

and supply many particulars which he had purposely omitted in the first chapter.

6. And there went up a mist from the earth, etc.

This was dew—evaporated water, borne up by the atmosphere.

7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

In creating Adam the whole human family were created; for they were all involved in him, were all comprehended in the first pair. Nothing pertaining to this dynasty, the heavens and the earth, has been created since. *Exod. xx. 11.*

As the vegetable species contained each its seed for reproduction within itself, so did each species of the animal kingdoms; each had its capability of reproduction in itself; so that the work of creation was complete. And herein was provision for the Sabbath, seeing creation was finished. The human soul is therefore reproduced by propagation, seeing that every other source is excluded; for thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. That is every thing belonging to this dynasty, and detailed in the book of Genesis.

8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden.

In the eastern part of the large district named Eden, the garden was placed. This lay on both sides of the river Euphrates, which river was the eastern boundary of Palestine.

There has been no little difficulty in settling the exact location of this spot, but the mention of Assyria, Ethiopia and Euphrates affords an approximation to its location. But it is important to remark that this Ethiopia is not that in Africa, but one lying further north, and including Midian, where Moses took his wife; for he has been accused of marrying an Ethiopian woman, who was a Gentile, though not a colored woman.

The flood may be supposed to have made such alterations in beds of rivers, and the face of the country, as to render the location of the garden difficult at this period, or impossible.

17. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The reasons are not given for this prohibition, but doubtless

they were infinitely wise and good. As the cultivation of piety, holiness and virtue are so much more important to man than any gratifications of sense, we can be at no loss respecting it.

This opportunity for these children of God to give the evidence of their love and obedience to God, the Author of their being, should have been esteemed as a precious favor to them, as it was a necessary regulation of government. This law neither the creature nor the Creator could dispense with. Its weighty and eventful sanction was in infinite benevolence to man.

He needed this momentous sanction to quicken his obedience; and the Lawgiver condescended to enact it, as we are now favored with the sanction of remediless ruin if we fall from grace. Heb. vi. 4, 6.

It has been esteemed one of the most difficult problems in theology, that man, being holy, could sin and fall. But Eve could not have done it if she had not been deceived. But being deceived, she ate, and incurred the curse, which was peremptory and unconditional, leaving no room for excuse or palliation.

What induced Adam to eat we are not told, but the woman gave the fruit to him, and he ate, and thereby incurred the curse with her. In that moment the divine sentence fell upon both of them, by their becoming mortal and depraved.

They could remain on earth for a time, as we do who are lying under the same curse.

The divine sentence was verified to the letter, in the fact that at that moment they became mortal or subject to mortality.

The doubt that is harbored whether the penalty was death only, or other penalties also, is to disregard both the context and the law itself, for neither the law itself, with its sanction, nor the context, will allow any other interpretation. If other judgments might justly be inflicted, it does not alter the penalty itself, which was death, and only death. The whole code of divine revelation throughout both Testaments confirms this fact. The sacrificial death of the types, and the sacrificial death of the Antitype for atonement, establish this position. If the death of Christ is every where held up as the propitiation, then death and death only was the penalty; else there is no atonement and no salvation.

If it be asked, did not the transgression incur the desert of eternal punishment, and is not eternal misery inflicted for it in the case of the unredeemed? I answer, true; but these concessions do not change the law, nor add any thing to the

letter of the divine sanction annexed to it. For we can neither add nor diminish; His law is finished. As the sentence pronounced upon the woman differed from the sentence upon the man in several particulars, and both differed from the threatened penalty, we perceive, that the penalty did not contain all that their sin rendered them liable to, and justly deserving of. The woman was sentenced to the sorrows of parturition, and with subjection to her husband. Neither of which was laid upon Adam, whose sentence was different.

As all these were incurred by their sin, and all differed from the penalty, we may learn, that the penalty did not contain all that their sin exposed them to; and also that different subjects might be made to endure degrees as the individual cases required. But all must suffer death, the penalty of the law, which can not be broken.

If then, all sinners deserve eternal death, although it be not in the penalty, it can not follow, that one not imbued with moral evil, must endure the same if his circumstances be so different as not to require it, he being under the same law. Yet he need not suffer eternal death, which is neither in the penalty, nor required by the circumstances of his individual case; yet he must endure that which is the penalty, viz., death, by himself, or by his substitute without any possible escape. In other words, the righteous and infinite substitute need not suffer that eternal death which the sinner deserved, and which was not in the penalty. But in becoming their substitute and taking their law place under the penalty, he of necessity had to suffer the exact penalty of the law they had broken. Which seems to have been what was by the Lawgiver deemed requisite under the circumstances. What cause then have we to admire the wisdom and goodness of the Lawgiver in so gloriously providing for redemption, and making it possible. If the Lawgiver inserted nothing but death in the penalty, in order that the substitute might endure it, then those persons who add to it both spiritual and eternal death, making the endurance of the penalty impossible to the substitute, are doing what they can to darken counsel, and to throw obscurity over a plain subject.

When the penalty was annexed to the law of Paradise the Divine Lawgiver had reference to the propitiation of Christ, and put into the penalty what ought to have been in it; and not what the transgression deserved, for then atonement and salvation had been impossibilities.

The precept might have been given without the penalty, as in parallel cases. Exod. xx. 3, 17. Lev. xxiv. 12-14.

Had there been no penalty annexed to the prohibition, the

price that would have been demanded of the surety would have been the same. Annexing the penalty did not change the result; the Lawgiver demanded just the propitiation that divine justice required—neither more nor less. When he annexed the penalty, he knew what its amount was just as well as he knew afterward. But annexing the penalty threw light upon the sacrificial code, and assists man's understanding of the whole subject.

An *ex post facto* law is unobjectionable in the divine government, because the divine government is perfect. An *ex post facto* penalty will be just the same with a *præ facto* one; and therefore in the divine government may either precede or succeed the transgression. Num. xv. 32-35.

The penalty annexed was not what Adam and Eve incurred, nor what the serpent incurred. Gen. iii. 14, 15. And it was not what the surety incurred; for he suffered what was not in the penalty, in the painful manner of his death on the cross, in the hidings of the Father's face, in the ignominy of his death between two thieves, in the previous scourging, his mock robes of royalty, his crown of thorns, his reed, and the sad gloom of the sepulcher. All these he suffered in addition to the penalty; because whatever was proper had to be laid upon him, but what was in the penalty seems to have been still more indispensable. Matt. v. 18.

The Mediator then did suffer the exact literal penalty of the law when he endured the death of the cross. But he suffered it as a substitute for man—sinful man, which verified the divine word, and maintained divine justice.

As so much has been said that is calculated to obscure this subject, and to prejudice the minds of Christians, I suggest the following passages for satisfaction: Isa. liii. 8-12. Dan. ix. 26. Rom. vi. 3-11. 1 Cor. xv. 3. Gal. iii. 13, 22, 27, 28, 29. Eph. i. 2-7.

Since nothing but the literal penalty of the law would satisfy the justice of God, the Son took on him the very manhood, that he might suffer death; and suffering in union with the infinite attributes of the divine nature allied to it, the death became of infinite value, and infinite efficacy; for sin being against the infinite Sovereign, and against his commandments, was rendered an infinite evil, and deserving an infinite punishment, such as eternal misery. The death of Christ was such an infinite atonement, or was of infinite value and efficacy. Although the sinner could not meet this demand of justice without enduring it eternally; yet the infinite person, suffering death on the cross, made atonement for the finite sinner of infinite value and efficacy, which there-

fore canceled the sinner's debt, and freed him from his infinite load of guilt. And it had this efficacy because he was infinite, and because the very penalty he endured was the very death of the sanction; and his blood cleanses from *all sin*. 1 John i. 7, 9.

It must therefore excite our wonder that divines have ever, and so long, doubted whether Jesus really suffered the literal penalty of the law, when the evidence is so clear. If when there is no law there is no transgression—no penalty, then the want of any penalty besides death, denies any. So if the furniture were removed from a house before the priest detected the leprosy in it, the furniture was not rendered unclean. Lev. xiv. 36.

Besides, the death penalty was a sacrificial death—a bloody death; as it is written. Without shedding of blood is no remission. Heb. ix. 11-28. If, therefore, the sacrificial death of Jesus made the atonement, then death was the penalty of the law. We can make nothing else the penalty without violating. Deut. iv. 2. Rev. xxii. 19.

24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh.

The union of husband and wife into one inseparable pair is too deep a mystery for the faith of some, and they never receive it; but they retain and manifest their unbelieving character. It is, however, always acknowledged by the pious in all generations, and under both dispensations. Unity in the flesh has various meanings. In the marital relation it is called affinity; in relations by birth it is called consanguinity. All the human family are one flesh, as identical with human nature. The union of the marital relation between husband and wife is the nearest of all relations among mankind, for it supersedes—overcomes all others, because it is the nearest of all; and so renders the parties a unity, and which cohabitation is, by it, rendered lawful and a duty; yet relatives of either party are, by it, prohibited from the marital relation more peremptorily than they are by consanguinity. But both prohibit it.

This is unavoidable, if one flesh means anything. This prohibiting of marriage by affinity does not only endure during the life of one of the parties to the marital relation, but remains to the survivor. This is proved by several Scriptures; for when John the Baptist reproved Herod for his unlawful marriage with Herodias, no mention is made of Philip being yet alive. This shows that the crime of Herod was that of incest which equally obtained whether Philip was alive or not. Matt. xiv.

4, and 1 Cor. vii. 11. There was no need of mentioning Philip's living.

This unity also throws light upon the doctrine of the Trinity; for if Adam and Eve could be one flesh by the marital relation, then the three infinite persons of the Godhead may be one God by a greater, even by an eternal union. If Christ and his disciples can be one by the covenant of redemption, he having manhood as well as they, and also by the Holy Spirit being in him and in them, we perceive that this union that is spoken of the Trinity, is no anomaly in the Scriptures, seeing that the Scriptures speak of a variety of unities.

The members of the invisible church of all ages are one brotherhood, one spiritual kingdom, one redeemed host, one spiritual household. The Lord Jesus prayed that they might be one, as he and the Father were one; that the fraternity of the brotherhood of Christians might be complete and enduring; for the unity of the Father and the Son was both complete and enduring. Although all the various unions spoken of are in some degree alike, they can not be the same with the union of the Trinity, which must stand alone, as no finite can be like infinite.

It must appear preposterous for any one to oppose the doctrine of the Trinity, seeing we all know that millions of persons make one nation, two persons make one pair, many persons one family, twelve men one jury, three hundred persons one congress; different syllables make one word, several letters make one word. To constitute one pair is impossible without different individuals.

When any thing is so plain men ought to be ashamed to cavil at it. One constituted by many is our national motto. But wicked men must fill their cup. There is no other way of constituting a corporation but by uniting several persons into one body, nor a duality without two individuals, nor a Trinity without three, nor a hybrid, nor an amalgam without the combination of more than one. Is there no truth nor philosophy in language when it uses the words, union, duality, trinity, hybrid, amalgam? Is a mulatto one man or more? Is a jury twelve juries and twelve panels, or twelve men and one panel?

Thus the Bible is sustained by universal reason and common sense. But infidelity has no support. 2 Sam. v. 1; xix. 12. 13. Rom. xii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 14–20, 27. Eph. i. 23. Ezek. xxxvii. 16, 17, 19, 22, 27.

Finally, it must be recollected that the various unities, referred to in this discussion, are not the same as the unity of the persons of the Godhead; yet they show conclusively

that many in unity is no anomaly. Three persons in the God-head, are not three and one in the same sense, but three persons and one God. If they were called three and one in the same sense, there might be some more excuse for objection. But as they are said to be three persons and one God, it affords no more ground for objection than does the motto, *E pluribus unum*; or than Xerxes' army was one army, although consisting of two millions of men. No one has ever disputed that one army might consist of two millions of men. Neither are the several unities referred to like one another.

This union between husband and wife is indissoluble, in so much that man can not dissolve it. God has enacted this permanency, that nothing besides incontinency of one of the parties, rendering such party infamous, can be made a just ground for divorce. If husband and wife separate for any other cause, they must remain single, or become reconciled: for neither can marry any other. 1 Cor. vii. 11.

That this is the moral law concerning this union, both in relation to affinity and consanguinity, appears in both Testaments. Lev. xviii. 6, 16, 17. 2 Sam. xx. 3. Amos ii. 7. Matt. xix. 5, 6. 1 Cor. vi. 16. Mark x. 8. Mal. ii. 15, 16.

The legislation of civil rulers in opposition to the moral precepts of the divine law, is plainly impious; and involves the guilt of adultery. Matt. v. 32.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1. Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.

Subtile—cunning; insinuating. It is not necessary to suppose that he was really any more cunning than any other, but seemingly so; for things are often spoken of in the Scriptures as being what they seem to be. Before the curse came upon the earth, the serpent had no such evil character as since the curse; but innocent and harmless as the dove.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, etc.

It has been difficult to conceive how our first parents, being holy, could sin. But as we have the fact, it is not necessary to inquire into the philosophy beyond what is given. Enough, however, is given us. Eve was deceived, and the woman being deceived was in the transgression. The curse had to be visited upon her because she transgressed. Her being deceived

did not excuse her. Rom. ix. 15-20. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 14. Prov. xvi. 1, 2, 25. Gen. vi. 5.

7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

The curse came upon them instantly: their guilty shame, and hiding themselves prove it: to this day the criminal hides himself.

14. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle.

The beasts of the field, not understanding moral subjects, are not considered moral agents, nor accountable creatures. But as the curse has come upon the ground, and upon every thing pertaining to it, for this sin, we know that the judgment is just, for God is just, infinitely just.

If labor were laid upon man as a curse, we know that many beasts, as camels, oxen, and horses, labor no less. Adam, or man, being the visible head of creation, and representing them, they have to partake of the curse of labor and death as well as he. Why do beasts suffer death, the literal penalty of the law?

15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

If we know that this enmity to this day is between man and the serpent tribe, then we know who was intended in this divine sentence: we know it was not the monkey, but the noxious reptile. And if any one thinks it was the monkey, we know, by that fact, that he is mistaken.

There is a fond propensity in some to indulge an unchastened imagination in inflating the solemn and ponderous words of divine revelation, until their gravity is so diminished that they are ready to be blown away and dissipated.

As this was a judgment and curse pronounced upon the serpent only, who received his sentence before they received theirs; for as he was the first in the crime of their eating, it was in order to pronounce sentence upon him first, who only could be concerned in it; it is, therefore, natural that they should seem to have paid no attention to it: as it may be that they did not hear it; at least it does not appear that they heard it. They had enough to do with their own affairs.

The same enmity that was put between the serpent and the woman, was also put between his seed and her seed, or between the descendants of both: the children of man were to crush

the head of the serpent; and the offspring of the serpent were to bruise the heel of the children of man in bruising their heads. This sentence is literally fulfilled at this day: which leads us to inquire, whether the judgment were not likewise to be interpreted literally? And it will assist our inquiry to remember that the literal serpent only has descendants or seed. Revelation nowhere speaks of the seed of the great adversary. It is written, That dragon fought, and his angels; but those evil angels are never called his seed. It is true, the children of the devil are mentioned, but only in the sense of their disposition as wicked men, who are really the seed of the woman. 1 John iii. 10. In this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil in a figurative sense: which are all men, and the seed of the woman.

The enmity that is pronounced between the woman and the serpent was to be equally between the seed of both, just as we perceive it to be at this day. It will not do, then, to infer that the seed of the woman means Christ; for it would scarcely seem congruous to suppose that this enmity was infused into him, as we must suppose if we understand him to be the seed referred to in the curse, as some incautiously have done.

If, however, no inspired writer has given any sanction to this modern interpretation of this curse upon the serpent, making it to have been the first announcement of the Messiah to our first parents, and to the world, it must appear to be without any adequate support. While no inspired writer has favored us with the knowledge that the Savior was intended in this passage, we may not so understand it. Moses spake of a prophet to be raised up in Israel like unto him. And this is interpreted to us, in the book of inspiration, to mean Christ. Acts vii. 37; iii. 20-22. And seed in the promise made to Abraham—Gen xxii. 18—is by the inspired writers interpreted to refer to Christ. Gal. iii. 16. If seed in the curse upon the serpent is nowhere so interpreted, we may believe that there was reason for the omission.

Unsupported and unauthorized interpretations of revelation are at least suspicious. But for such unauthorized interpretations, commentators had never made the word *seed* in the curse upon the serpent to mean the Lord Jesus; nor would the translators of the Bible have made Eve say, in Gen. iv. 1: *I have gotten a man from the Lord*; nor have made the apostle say, I could wish myself accursed from Christ, Rom. ix. 3; nor would commentators have made the death penalty to include both spiritual and eternal death, so as to make it impossible to show that the surety endured the penalty of the law; or that the salvation of sinners can be accomplished by what he did; when

by not so wresting the death penalty the accomplishment of their salvation is clear, and without embarrassment.

If this passage concerning the seed of man, and the seed of the serpent, be taken literally, it is obvious enough; but if it be construed as including Satan and the destruction of his kingdom by the crushing of his head, the subject is darkened. If this newly-infused enmity between the snake and the woman, and between the offspring of both, be interpreted literally, it is sustained and verified by facts, at this day, in the antipathy between the two races.

But enmity infused into Christ is not agreeable to what we are taught of the Lord from heaven who is to subdue Satan's kingdom by his benevolence and grace, by which he wins them over to his standard, sanctifies them by his Spirit, and cleanses them from sin by his blood. But what has enmity to do in this work of grace? But as this application of the curse upon the serpent rests upon mere imagination, having no real support, it can not be maintained: we have no right to maintain it. Several other difficulties also will be found insuperable. The passage not only omits to say anything about Satan, but inserts what is utterly inconsistent with that interpretation.

"Cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field." Now, why is he so classed with the beasts of the field, unless he was one of them?

"Upon thy belly shalt thou go." It is easy to see that this has no application to Satan, for he does not crawl like a snake. Therefore, it is obvious, that the curse regards the serpent, or snake, and him only.

"And dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." The snake crawling upon the ground is continually stirring the dust, and inhaling it. But this has no relation to Satan. How clear then has the Scripture made this point! Surely the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.

"All the days of thy life." If this language is entirely inapplicable to Satan, who has no days of his life—for it is not measured by days—then we have another demonstration of the correctness of our construction of the passage.

No one has a right to put a fanciful and unsupported construction upon a passage of Scripture; for if it can not be proven by revelation, it may be a falsehood, however strong may be his belief of it. Those who have supposed that they saw, in this text, a promise of our Savior to our first parents, have not well considered the subject; or they would not have thought of looking for the announcement of the most rich and

glorious treasure of the gospel wrapped and concealed in the curse pronounced upon the serpent.

No man may make fanciful interpretations of Scripture, drawing upon his own imagination: for God's word may not be so trifled with; for this would open the door to all heresy, all error, and all fanaticism. The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. Mal. ii. 7. Matt. xv. 14. Isa. iii. 20. Jer. xxiii. 28.

Suppose it obvious to us, that the serpent was not of himself competent to the conversation ascribed to him, but needed inspiration or supernatural assistance, who is competent to supply the seeming deficiency? Had we not better say, If our Father has not seen it meet to explain this point to us, then the explanation is not needful for us: Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Many points may be thus left for the exercise of our faith.

22. And the Lord said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

Our need of a divine guide, in divine things, plainly appears the moment revelation ceases in explaining them. Had Adam and Eve eaten of this tree before they fell? If they had, why should not its virtue have been attended with immortality? If they did not eat of it before they fell; nor afterward, how was the object of its creation accomplished, unless it accomplished that object by thus being a type of the Savior?

23. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden.

The means employed to protect the tree of life from the incongruous approach of man after the fall, could have been as effectually employed to protect the other tree before the fall. But if they had been so employed the trial of man's obedience had not been made.

The free agency of man, both before and after the fall, appears in both instances. Man was commanded to abstain in the first instance, and then was left to his own free agency; but in the other, he was not left to his free agency as to eating after the fall; but was driven from the garden, and the tree of life was guarded by angels with a flaming sword to prevent his approach to it.

These facts are of significance, showing that man in some things is left to his own free agency; and showing that the

divine Sovereign uses means to accomplish his purposes with his creatures, to induce them, or make them willing, to do his will. He used severe means with Pharaoh until he was willing to let the people go; thus treating him as a free agent.

Some things can be accomplished by physical force; while others can be accomplished only by moral means, as the trial of obedience and the moral virtues, which require moral means. Deut. viii. 2. 2 Chron. xxxij. 31. Gen. xxii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 7.

The divine Sovereign controls the whole universe and everything in it, just as he pleases. Ps. cxxxv. 6. Some things he controls by physical force, and some things he controls by moral means: for having made man a moral agent, he controls him in many things by moral means, dealing with him as with a moral agent; not governing him by physical force only, as Arminians suppose that he must, if he controls him at all.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 1. And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

"Our English translation here seems indefensible, because I can not find any one text where the Hebrew particle *eth* signifies from, as Eve is made to say, '*from the Lord.*'"—Dr. Parkhurst. Mr. Geddes interprets it as, "I have acquired a god-like man-child." Of which Dr. Parkhurst remarks, "But surely the incommunicable name Yahveh must not be degraded to the sense of godlike."

If our version of this passage, by the consent of learned men, be involved in so much obscurity, it must appear that it does not give the sense of the original, but mistakes it.

In endeavoring to ascertain the true sense of the passage, it is necessary to consider, that, whenever a word is used in a sense that is new, it is indispensable that the context contains it, and that the subject requires it.

If this word during Eve's life was in use only as a common word in the Hebrew language, and not appropriated nor used as a name for God, Eve, therefore, could not have used it as a name, but only a compound verb as it really was, compounded of being and will be, the *vau* being placed in the word before the last radical. It was, therefore, an anachronism for the translators to make Eve use it as a divine name; for it was not known nor used for a divine name, until it was

given to Moses as such, more than two thousand years afterward. Exod iii. 13. 14. Hear Dr. Parkhurst again: "Eve on the birth of her first-born. says, I have gotten the very, or, even Jehovah, referring to the evangelical promise—Gen. iii. 15—which promise, however, it is plain from her mistake. she did not perfectly comprehend." But as she did not refer to Gen. iii. 15, nor to any other promise, she is free from the charge of that mistake. And we can easily believe that she was clear of it; for, if the word in her day was in use only as a verb, she could only use it as such. See Exod. iii. 14 and vi. 3, when it was appropriated as a divine name, and first used as such. If the word be used in the second chapter of Genesis as a divine name, it will be recollected that Moses wrote the Pentateuch after this divine name was announced to him by revelation; and the Israelites had become acquainted with it before the Pentateuch was written; and when the people saw it in the Pentateuch, it was familiar to them.

In discussing this subject, Dr. Parkhurst says, "But after repeated and attentive consideration, I think Mr. Hutchinson is right in making this divine of *ie* the *essence*, and the particle *ene* existing." If these learned men so thought, then they were much perplexed with this subject, and were far from comprehending the language of Eve; to show which was my object in quoting them. From the fact conceded by them that this word is compounded of the participle *being*, and the future tense *will be*, and as it had not then been appropriated as a divine name, then Eve could have used it as a common word in the Hebrew language, and in its natural signification, as there is no reason to doubt she did. And then the passage will be cleared of all the mists that have been thrown upon it, and its sense become entirely evident, viz: *I have gotten a man that being will be: I have gotten what will be a man.* The reason of her so expressing herself will readily appear, if we reflect that she would naturally be grieved with the apprehension that her posterity were to be of such a diminutive size as her babe showed, instead of the more worthy and respectable stature of Adam; for she had not then become familiar, as we have, with the offspring of the various races of creatures growing and attaining the size of their ancestors. But being informed by her husband that Cain would not remain such a diminutive dwarf, but, if he lived to maturity, he would attain to the fullness of his father's stature; and learning this pleasing fact, it was natural for her to express her exultation in the very terms that she did. I have an offspring, which, though he be a diminutive dwarf, will ultimately be a man of respectable stature.

There is another instance of this word used in its natural sense, that is quite relevant and significant. Solomon, in showing that a fallen tree lies and continues in the place in which it falls, says, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be," that is, there being, it shall be, alluding to its continuance. Eccl. xi. 3.

The use, therefore, of this compound verb as a word in the Hebrew language, as Eve used it, is sufficiently established. It is surprising that so many comprehensible passages of the Scriptures should so long have been misunderstood by the church. Among the causes of this darkness may be reckoned the error of expounders, mistaking the curse upon the serpent for a promise of the blessed Savior.

Another cause was the neglect of chronology, in giving to the word IEVE (ieve) a sense in Eve's life, which it acquired twenty-three hundred years afterward. Another was drawing upon imagination for expositions, instead of biblical science.

Until expositors of the Scriptures shall correct these habits, we need not expect the current of biblical criticism to run clear.

7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

The word *sin* is sometimes used for *sin-offering*. He who knew no sin, was made sin (sin-offering) for us.

As Cain was the first-born, the rights of primogeniture were his. His younger brethren were to look up to him as servants to their lord. Chap. xxvii. 29, 40.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

At this early period those districts of the country about the residence of man may have had names; but if not the historian could use those names which they afterward acquired, as Lord is used in the history of times twenty-three hundred years before it had the sense in which it is there used. Gen. ii. 4.

17. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare a son.

It is not here taught that he found his wife, or became acquainted with her, in the land of Nod. But it is said, as in the first verse, *he knew her*, had carnal knowledge of her. She was

a daughter or granddaughter of Adam. Cain at this time may have been two hundred years old. When their lives were hundreds of years, they did not marry young, but were sometimes over one hundred years old. We may not conclude that events were as near together in time, as they appear to be in the narrative; for a short narrative may extend through a long period of time.

After being a fugitive and a vagabond for many years, he may have returned and married a daughter of Adam, and took his wife to the land of Nod to which he emigrated, which lay north of Midian and east of the Euphrates.

26. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.

Then began men to meet in the name of the Lord; for previous to this period every man worshiped alone; but now they came together in the name of the Lord—met for social worship. The Hebrew *kra*, means *to convene* as well as *to call*.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 3. And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.

If Adam begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image, that son must have had both a body and soul, or he would not have borne Adam's image as a human being.

If the soul of Seth was not descended from his parents, but was a separate and independent creation, and added to his body at some period before birth, as some *imagine*, then Adam did not beget a son in his own likeness; for the mere body would not constitute the likeness of him who consisted of both soul and body. If the soul of Seth were not propagated as well as his body, then it will follow that in his most essential nature he was not begotten of his parents—was not their offspring.

It will also follow that Adam was not the federal head of any of the race; and that they did not, and could not fall with him in his first transgression. Rom. v. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. It will also follow that if the first Adam were not the federal head of the race, so that they should partake both of his nature and his fall, then the second Adam can no more be a federal

head to his spiritual seed; for the federal headship of both is shown to be similar in the fifth of Romans.

It will also follow that we did not sin in Adam, and could not if our souls have been created since the fall.

It will also follow that Levi did not pay tithes in Abraham, and was not in his father's loins when Melchizedek met him, as is affirmed. Heb. vii. 10.

It will also follow that Gen. ii. 1, which affirms that creation was finished at the end of the sixth day, is not true.

It also must follow that Exod. xx. 11, which affirms that all the souls existing in the days of Moses were created in the first week, is not true.

And it will further follow, that if the work of creation has been in progress ever since the races of man and other animals have been in existence, then there was no ground for the Sabbath in all this period; because the work of creation, respecting our dynasty, has been still in progress; and there will be no ground for it, and consequently no Sabbath, until the last spirit shall have been created.

Neither is it necessary to adopt the opinion of Watt's Indian philosopher, "That souls were brought into actual development on the sixth day, and deposited in a warehouse, to be reserved for future demand;" but that they were created as every plant was, with its seed involved within itself for future development. Acorns created on the third day were not laid up in a granary to be continually dealt out while the vegetable kingdom continues.

If each plant could so have its seed involved in itself, then we can have no difficulty in believing that the same infinite Creator could, in like manner, involve the posterity of every race of animals in their first ancestors.

It would seem to be prudent, at least, for those who oppose the doctrine of the propagation of souls, to inquire of themselves, whether their opposition does not proceed from a doubt of its possibility for the Creator to provide for their development in this way. If this be its origin it is infidelity.

This doctrine of the propagation of souls no more infers materialism, than does the doctrine of their subsequent creation. Creation being a work of Omnipotence, would seem to imply a subject for that power to be exercised upon. But Omnipotence does not need that previous subject: for all existences besides himself have been created from nothing.

What other ground of opposition to this doctrine of propagation is even supposable? If those in opposition have no other ground, then they have none at all, or what is worse than none. For to reject the doctrine of the soul's pro-

pagation, because it is believed to be impossible, infers unbelief in the divine attributes. Seeds, in the vegetable kingdom, are quite different from the bodies that produce them; and yet they are propagated from those bodies. But the souls of men are not so unlike the souls of their parents.

The author of these comments has not supposed that the souls of offspring are derived from the bodies of their parents; but he believes, that as their parents consist of both soul and body, their offspring are derived from both the soul and body of their parents, as the infinite Creator has provided for.

Inferior animals are also compound beings, consisting of both body and spirit. Must their spirits also be separate and distinct creations? and thus the work of creation in this dynasty be ever continuous?

If they had not spirits as well as bodies, they could not be serviceable to man, as their Creator evidently intended them to be; for we see that intelligence is indispensable to their being serviceable. But their souls or spirits terminate existence with the life of their bodies.

Solomon uses the same appellative for the spirit of a beast that he uses for the soul of a man. Eccl. iii. 21.

That beasts have intelligence, and therefore have spirits, is proved by the prophet, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." Isa. i. 3.

We are too little conversant with the evanescent subject of spirituality to pretend to give it in all its details; and we may not dogmatize upon any subject. But what revelation plainly teaches us we know. And if it plainly teaches that creation was finished in six days, then we know that it was so finished; and has not been progressing in our dynasty since. Gen. i. 11; ii. 1, 4; v. 3. Exod. xx. 11.

If such errors and such confusion have resulted from the gratuitous comment, that the curse upon the serpent was an announcement of Emanuel, it may teach us that fanciful and gratuitous expositions of the word are highly criminal, as well as injurious. The expositor may not teach what he does not know, for he can not.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 2. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

Sons of God—pious men. *Daughters of men*—daughters of the wicked, impious women. These irreligious marriages corrupted private families, and thus accomplished the degeneracy of that generation. The pious, who should have been the salt of the earth, had lost their savor by these ungodly alliances; so that their posterity could not be trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; an ungodly mother not being competent to this evangelical duty.

5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The word *man* includes the race. And the corruption which commenced in the fall, being so early in man's history, being at the very root, contaminated all the human family. If man at the fall lost his holiness, then he was only unholiness and depravity in his soul. At the fall the change from holiness to depravity was entire. There was in him no love to God, no true repentance nor faith; for these are evangelical graces. At the fall depravity was total—complete, *i. e.*, as to the total want of holiness toward God. There was in him nothing that was pleasing to God; because every thought of his mind was evil. He that opposes this doctrine of total depravity opposes his Maker. If in mercy the Lord has put some natural virtues in fallen man, as industry, sobriety, honesty, they are good in the sense that they are useful to society, as are dew, and rain, the faithfulness of a dog, the strength of the ox; but they have no relation to holiness, for this relates to God and infers love to him, and delight in him.

These virtues are denominated natural or carnal, because they exist in the natural man, for his selfish and worldly interests, as the Lord said, "All their works they do to be seen of men, or to have the praise of men." They can be practiced without piety. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 3. Titus iii. 8.

This is the reason why the plowing of the wicked is sin, Prov. xxi. 4; and why the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv. 8; and why his prayer shall be

abomination, Prov. xxviii. 9; and why an evil tree can not bring forth good fruit. Matt. vii. 16-18; xii. 34, 35.

If every imagination of the heart be evil, then the whole man is evil, for the heart is the seat of what relates to moral character; for it is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. Acts viii. 21. Rom. x. 10.

If, without faith it is impossible to please God, then an unconverted man can not do anything that is good in the sight of the Holy One; everything he thinks, says, or does is sin. Speaking of man as he is in himself, the prophet says, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. lxiv. 6.

This too is the ground of the sinner's inability, the ground of his entire dependence on God, and on his grace for salvation. John vi. 64, 65; xv. 5. Prov. i. 28. Gal. 5. 17.

6. And it repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

What is revealed we ought to endeavor to understand in its object and purport. Else how will it be useful, and its purpose be accomplished? It is true that some passages may contain incomprehensible things to teach us humility, to humble us in the dust, and remind us that Jehovah, his ways and thoughts are above us, as the heavens are above the earth. This, and other practical lessons which they teach, we should diligently receive.

The difficulties of this text are neither few nor small, and are increased from the fact that revelation denies God's repenting. As he can not repent in the full sense of repentance, sorrow of heart, as sinners must repent, is obvious enough. And that he does repent in some sense is equally obvious; so that both are true, the negative and the affirmative. It is true that God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Num. xxiii. 19. And that he does repent, in some minor sense of the term, is also obvious. From divine perfections God can not repent in the sense in which sinners repent, for repentance in this sense infers a change of views, which can not be affirmed of God. But as the conduct of men often makes it necessary for God to change his administration respecting them, it shows no change in him; for he always intended to do so. As this change of conduct is one of the attendants of man's repentance, it is called repentance; a part is put for the whole. Such a change of administration does not infer any mutability in him; for it is a change of administration that he always intended to make when the conduct of men should require it. And he gave notice of it to Israel by the

prophet, "At what time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said that I would benefit them." Jer. xviii. 9, 10.

That he would repent of the good that he had promised, shows that his repentance is not like man's which is regretting evil, but only a change of conduct, a mere change of administration. As a change of conduct is a necessary attendant of repentance, and is here, by metonymy, called repentance, and when applied to him is always a repentance of good, although it is applied to good promised to men, or to afflictions threatened them.

When God finished creation he looked upon it and pronounced it all good, Gen. i. 31; but as man had become wicked, he would remove them by the flood. It was his pleasure to place them upon the earth; but now it is his pleasure to remove them from it. Gen. vi. 7. He would do this, not because he had changed, but because they had changed.

And as it is said that it grieved him at his heart, it is speaking after the manner of men to give them to understand that his displeasure at their conduct was deep and earnest. It is as difficult as it is important for man to conceive how deeply the Holy One of Israel abhors sin, and those who presumptuously commit it. His word now shows it, and the day of judgment will declare it to a wondering universe.

9. Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations: and Noah walked with God.

As the sin which corrupted and destroyed that generation, was the being unequally yoked together with unbelievers, he would no more have been spared than others if he had partaken of the same crime. But in his generations, or matrimonial alliances, he was without fault, or perfect in his generations. Gen. vi. 9.

17. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die.

Here the earth is shown to be the dry land, and the creations that pertained to it. Destroying these creations was destroying the earth and the world. 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6. Destroying the earth is not destroying the globe. So man, or all flesh, is called the earth, verses 12, 13 of this chapter. And ungodly men of that generation are called the world. 2 Pet. ii. 5. This confirms the notes upon Gen. i. 8, 10.

We are likewise enabled to understand the limitations to be applied to the words, all and every; for neither all men nor all flesh were destroyed by the flood, as some of all were saved in the ark.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 1. And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

House means family. The righteousness of the pious patriarch did not consist in the exemption from corruption or depravity of his fallen nature; but in the righteousness of faith, which only could consist with exemptions from the corruptions of his generation or their wicked life; for such as walk in the course of the ungodly have not faith. Jas. ii. 18. 1 John iii. 9.

That his righteousness was the righteousness of faith—was that of Abraham, and other patriarchs—is shown by his being put in the same category with them. Heb. xi. 7, 8.

4. * * * And every living substance, that I have made, I will destroy from off the earth.

“Every living substance” must have a limited interpretation, and must except all that were in the ark, and all the fish in the sea. This limitation, under which such words as *all* and *every* are to be taken, is generally applicable to them in the Scriptures. Adam said of Eve, that she was the mother of all living, although she was not the mother of anything living; Adam was living and she was living, the beasts were living, as well as the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, but she was the mother of nothing. Yet the declaration of Adam was significant and expressive; for it was spoken prospectively, and would be true at some future time; and it is now, that all the race of human beings are descendants of Eve. It is, therefore, entirely obvious that words in the Scriptures are often used in a sense quite different from their common one, and yet their sense is evident from the context and parallel passages. Matt. vii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 7; and notes upon them.

But wicked, ungodly men, who do not care to know the truth, will not learn what is so clear and obvious.

6. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

The generations of man, from Adam to Noah, show clearly

the age of this dynasty at the time of the flood, making it 1776 years. And as he was five hundred years old when he was commanded to build the ark, then he could not have been more than a hundred years in building it.

10. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

Seven days after Noah entered the ark, the rain commenced. See v. 4.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 2. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped.

There was not only rain but the fountains of the great deep were broken up. The whole was a display of supernatural power, in causing an unnatural pouring down of rain, and causing the waters of the sea to rush out on the continents, until the whole surface of the globe was submerged. But both the sources of the flood were stopped or suspended.

3. And the waters returned from off the earth continually.

The waters returned to their bed—the oceans—after a hundred and fifty days from the commencement.

The rapid flow of such vast bodies of water from the oceans, over the continents, would naturally sweep away vast quantities of the earth's surface, tearing down hills, and filling the valleys, and changing beds of rivers. And still greater would be the changes from the return of the waters; for the earth being softened by the waters lying over it for eight months, would render it still more subject to the influence of those rushing currents. It is, therefore, accountable that the garden of Eden and its rivers can not now be identified, for the whole face of the country, we expect, would be changed, with the location of rivers, lowering mountains and filling valleys.

6. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark.

Forty days from the time the ark rested.

7. And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

Although the waters covered the earth, the raven would not

need to return; for he, being of a different nature from the dove, being less timid, and could light upon the floating pieces of timber, would pick up food out of the water.

13. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth.

Although the waters had subsided, and were no more seen, yet it was not deemed suitable for Noah to leave the ark until one month and sixteen days after, when the soil would be dried. We are interested with the calendar of this early period. A month was reckoned as thirty days, v. 3; making one hundred and fifty days, or five months from the commencement of the flood. And verse 13 shows that the flood was ten months and fourteen days upon the earth before it quite disappeared, and that Noah did not leave the ark until the twenty-seventh day of the next month, on the seventeenth day, when the earth was entirely dry; so that he was one year and seventeen days in the ark.

22. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

There will be a general conflagration at the end of this dynasty—our world, when the whole that belongs to it shall melt with fervent heat and be consumed. 2 Pet. iii. 10. The opinion that the globe itself may be reserved for a new dynasty, after the entire removal of this is not improbable; for if, as some believe, that it has been the seat of six dynasties already, it may be the seat of more. If it should be the seat of more, it may be that sin will be unknown to them, as it probably was unknown to the previous dynasties.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 2. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea.

All the lower creation were to be in subjection to man, and to have instinctive fear planted in their nature, which is a great favor to man.

5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

In the next verse the reason is given, viz: man was made in the image of God. And as this law, with the sanctification of the Sabbath was given before the ceremonial law, and was founded on man's nature, which is a reason that will always abide, we learn its perpetual obligation: capital punishment must be inflicted upon the murderer. He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. This does not mean that he who sheds a few drops without injury, nor he who takes blood humanely as a surgeon, but means that the murderer shall be executed.

Man must prove his love, reverence and obedience to God by obeying his law; lest dumb beasts be moved of God with the spirit of destruction to slay the murderer. 1 Kings xiii. 24; xx. 36. Acts xxviii. 4.

Those who have the authority must execute the murderer, or contract their guilt. Deut. xix. 10; xxi. 8. 1 Kings ii. 31.

We may do well to take notice of the word *hand* in reference to an animal that has none; and learn how to receive, and how to interpret the language of revelation. It seems not to be so material whether the language be literally correct as it is whether the true sense is conveyed. A beast can use its instrumentality to slay a man as well as if it had hands. The hand of a beast, in such a connection, means the instrumentality of a beast; and the language is as intelligent, and the sense as obvious, as any other language could be; and as the object of language is to communicate ideas, the object is gained when language is understood. Such figures and metaphors are so common in the Bible that criticisms and objections against God are provided against.

To express famine, the heavens are said to be brass, and the earth iron. Deut. xxviii. 23. For our God is a consuming fire. God is a rock. God is a man of war. Angels are called men, and men gods. Gen. xviii. 2. John x. 34. The tongue is a fire—a world of iniquity. Jas. iii. 6. He that eateth me; this is my body; I am the bread that came down from heaven.

If Papists run into idolatry, and worship bread and wine, because of this metaphorical use of words, they have no need of doing so, for the sense of these metaphors is entirely obvious, for the bread was three times pronounced bread after the prayer. 1 Cor. xi. 26–28. Besides, there was no need of supposing any change of the bread to make it his body; for

his body was bread. John vi. 50. If he were bread, then his body and the bread were identical without any change. If he were bread when he came from heaven, the bread would not need any change to become his body, seeing that was already bread. That the bread was not changed we know by our senses of seeing, feeling and tasting, besides our knowing it by revelation. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

19. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

If all but Noah's family were destroyed, then it follows, of course, that they must furnish all its inhabitants. No other race could be in the earth. It follows also, conclusively, that Indians, negroes and all others, now extant, have descended from that family.

How the variety in the races has occurred is immaterial: we have both the facts of a single ancestry, and variety in the descendants. As Canaan, the son of Ham, was cursed, he may have needed marks to distinguish him from others, that the judgment falling upon the right ones, might be understood by men. If there had not been some mark set upon the descendants of Canaan, posterity could not at this day have seen the fulfillment of the curse.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 5. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands.

That there were no human beings on earth besides the family of Noah, will ever be true to the end of time. Verse 32.

Besides, if the Africans are of a different ancestry than that of Adam and Noah, they are separate from all the blessings of the gospel of Christ; for he took upon him the seed of Abraham, that he might be a Savior to men.

As the prophet claims Africans as subjects of grace, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God, Ps. lxxviii. 31; and as we see them melting under the gospel of Christ, and bowing to his yoke, we can understand the subject better than Cuvier and the anatomists. Heb. ii. 14-17. 1 Cor. xv. 21. Rom. v. 9-21.

Those who have no interest in the first Adam will have none in the second.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 1. And the whole earth was of one language and one speech.

A repetition of the same idea is often indulged by the inspired writers, as I, even I, do bring. Gen. vi. 17. Dan. iii. 26.

If the whole earth was of one language we can thereby perceive that they were of one tribe, of one race. Verse 6.

5. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

The term *children of men* denotes their degeneracy, which is also evinced by the useless enterprise in which they engaged.

The Lord came down. This is speaking after the manner of men, to impress upon men the truth that God attends to our affairs, as his being said to repent, shows his deep feeling upon the subject.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 1. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

He went north from Egypt into the south, the south part of Canaan.

3. And he went on his journeys from the south even unto Bethel.

From the south part of Canaan, where he first entered, he proceeded to Bethel, going north.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

These trained servants were such as were suitable for the military enterprise, being about one-fifth of his domestics,

making the whole of them, the superannuated, the women, the children and all, about fifteen hundred and ninety. So numerous must have been his domestics, bought and raised, which belonged to this godly man, the father of the faithful. He holds to this day this honorable title. Who is the Father of us all, that Abraham our father has found. And if ye be Christ, then are ye Abraham's seed according to the promise.

Had he not had this numerous family, he would not have been so suitable a person for setting up the kingdom of God upon the earth. And if there had not been domestics, bondmen under his control, the church would have been without order, and without government; for it is written, "I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the ways of the Lord." Gen. xviii. 19.

Abraham was the greatest slaveholder in the world, and the best man, if we except Melchizedek.

18. And Melchizedek king of Salem.

The word Jerusalem contains the name of his kingdom, which shows where this man lived and reigned.

We should have known by this passage that he was a king, and priest of the Most High. And we would have been content with so much, but when the apostle adds more, we are thrown into inextricable confusion.

That he was without father, mother, etc., does not relate to his genealogical record, is shown. Heb. vii. 8, for he was still living. To have been without beginning of days or end of life, respecting priesthood, is unintelligible; but when it is said that he liveth, the inspired writer using the verb in the present tense, he was living when the epistle was written, and did not die as the Levitical priests did.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 2. And he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door.

These persons were messengers from heaven sent to Abraham. But he then did not know this, but took them to be men like himself. And the inspired writer calls them by the name of what Abraham took them to be. Hence we learn this principle of interpretation, that inspired writers often speak of things under the name of what they appear to be, although in reality he knows them to be something else. It is written

there came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote on the plaster of the wall, Dan. v. 5, while it was such only in appearance. In like manner, John speaks of seeing a white horse, a red horse, and a black horse; and he speaks of them as realities, while they were only the appearances of such in a vision. The hospitality of the patriarch is worthy of imitation.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 11. And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake.

In some cases Abraham did not let his faith shine before men; and he had cause to be humbled when he perceived that this Philistine had a greater abhorrence of vice than he had believed. His excuse was insufficient: for his statement that she was his sister, meant that she was not his wife.

12. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.

The crime of incest had not obtained in the days of the patriarchs. In the first generation it could not obtain. As no law on the subject had been given, no sin would be imputed—no judgment follow.

14. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and men servants, and women servants, and gave them unto Abraham and restored him Sarah his wife.

As a kind of satisfaction to Abraham for the disrespect shown him, the king of Gerar made presents to him of his property, sheep and oxen, and men servants and maid servants. This transferring of property-right in servants was common in society; and does not seem to have been esteemed any hardship; for the servants ran the chance of getting a better master, as well as of getting a worse one. Gen. xxiv. 50; xxix. 24, 29. This is not unlike the manner of giving men wives in some eastern countries: young women are sold or given to husbands at the discretion of parents only, and they think it no hardship. In this fallen world many curses from God's righteous hand have come upon it. Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. 1 Cor. vii. 21. Gen. ix. 25. Josh. ix. 23, 27.

17. So Abraham prayed unto God, and God healed Abimelech.

We are to love those who have done evil to us, and to do them good, and pray for them.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 12. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her.

A pious man must take his cross, deny himself, and bring fruit unto God. Abraham afterward learned this truth when he was called to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice to God. Here he is required, in a manner, to offer up Ishmael, or turn him out into the world, and to withdraw a father's protection, because he was the son of a bondwoman. Although he was Abraham's son, he could not be a co-heir with Isaac. Being born a slave, put him in a different condition from Isaac who was free-born.

This is God's law; and man can not change or repeal it. If poor, short-sighted man can not see the wisdom and goodness of the divine law, his ignorance should teach him humility, not rebellion.

Sarah perceived sooner than Abraham, that the peace of the family could not be preserved with these two rival interests. And however grievous it was to him he must cast off his own son; for as he could not be put down to the place of a servant because he was a son, so neither could he be put up to the rank of a son because he was born a servant—born of a bondwoman: the only alternative therefore was to eject him from the family.

The disposition shown by Ishmael and his mother showed clearly that the peace of the family required the sacrifice. Gen. xv. 4; xxi. 9.

He that bringeth up his servant delicately, shall have him become his son at the length. Prov. xxix. 21. Hagar had enjoyed too many honors, and too many high privileges for her pride and wayward disposition to bear. If she had been meek and humble, and so trained her son, it might have been different.

Those who regard God's word know whether all men are born equal.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God.

A due attention to the language of Scripture will teach us the rules of interpretation; and will teach us that the words are often to be received with limitation that is suggested by the subject. *Neither do thou any thing to him*—and yet surely he might unbind him, and release him from the altar on which he was bound, verse 9. Such language, as *all, every, all men, all the world, nothing, no man*, etc., are often to be taken in a limited sense. Such universal terms are used when, obviously, the sense is limited. Gen. xxxi. 29.

Again, *now I know that thou fearest me*. Surely God always knows all things; but now he knew it demonstratively; it was manifested—now he knew it as a transaction—as an act. Although he knew it before, yet he had it in demonstration to ground his action upon. Hence the indispensable necessity of works to prove faith, as shown by the apostle. James ii. 14. If Abraham had not obeyed, he would have shown a disobedient and rebellious spirit—he would have shown unbelief; whereas, by doing what was commanded, he let his light shine, proving both his obedience and his faith. One disposition or the other he must show, as every one must, his disobedience and unbelief, or his obedience and faith. The tree must show what it is by the fruit it bears.

Abraham did not deserve any good from God, for this illustrious and noble act of obedience and faith; for in his whole character there was sin enough to procure his eternal ruin. But his sins being all canceled and put away by a Savior to come, in whose righteousness his faith gave him an eternal interest, God, through grace, could reward his pious works.

We should be careful of inferring, as that God did not know before, because he said, *Now I know that thou fearest me*. Gen. ii. 19; xviii. 20, 21. Exod. xxxiii. 5. John xi. 42. Deut. viii. 2; xiii. 3; xxxii. 20. Judges ii. 22; iii. 1, 4. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

What advantage is gained by the humble and obedient, meek and pious child of God, who walks in faith, appears in Gen. xxii. 16–18.

18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

The seed of Abraham in this place refers to the Messiah, and is so interpreted. Gal. iii. 16.

His seed is spoken of before, referring to his posterity as to their number and prosperity, and as inheriting the blessings of the covenant of grace made with him; but this is the first announcement of the Messiah under the term seed.

That all nations were to be blessed in Abraham and in his seed is quite a different thing from the declaration that every individual of those nations would be so blessed. If some of all nations, all kindreds, all tongues, and of all tribes, are so blessed, the prophecy is fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 4. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Marrying cousins or relations by either consanguinity or affinity was not a transgression of any law; and therefore the judgments which now may be expected to follow, were not then incurred. But when the law was given by Moses, then the statutes against incest were very plainly enunciated, both with respect to consanguinity and affinity; for if marriage makes both parties one flesh, then incest obtains in marrying relations by affinity, just as it does in marrying relations by consanguinity.

15. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel.

Eliezer had prayed for this event; and before he had finished praying, his prayer was answered. From this answer to a prayer, relating to human thoughts and actions, we learn that the thoughts and actions of moral agents are entirely under the control of Divine Providence. It is true that Rebekah's heart devised her way—that she chose her own way. Prov. xvi. 9. Isa. lxvi. 3, 4. She came just as freely as she could have come if there had been no Providence directing her steps, had such a thing been possible. But it is not possible that she could have come at all, without the divine hand leading, guiding and bearing her. It is written—A man's goings are of the Lord. Prov. xx. 24; and without me ye can do nothing. John xv. 5.

The Creator could not accomplish the great and glorious purposes for which he created the world, if he could not control every thing in it.

35. And the Lord hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men servants, and maid servants, and camels, and asses.

Eliezer showed the prosperity of his master, and how good the Lord had been to him in giving him so much property and securing him in the enjoyment of it.

To accuse Abraham of being wicked in holding this property is to show the spirit of infidelity; for while he held all this property, the Lord bore testimony to his piety, saying, "Now I know that thou fearest God." To criminate him is to disbelieve God—to make him a liar. 1 John v. 10.

When men imbibe principles that are contrary to the divine teachings, they are committed to infidelity. Lev. xxv. 45, 46.

61. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

It is not usual with inspired writers to indulge in repetition of an idea in new language. The creation of man is recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, and repeated with additions in the second; these are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 23. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

If it clearly appears that God had purposes to accomplish concerning the children of Rebekah, and that he would and did accomplish them; we may also believe that the same is equally true respecting all men, all things, and all events.

Although, by the general laws of primogeniture the younger brothers were to be servants to the older brother; yet there often were exceptions, and as often as God saw good; as when Reuben went up to his father's couch, and forfeited his birth-right. Gen. xlix. 4; xlviii. 19. Deut. xxi. 16, 17.

The sovereign had a right to create such domestic relations for this degenerate world as he saw good, and to make the condition of brothers as unequal as he pleased; and no one may say, What dost thou? If he saw good to give Saul the scepter over Israel, and make him their master, and them his servants, it was right—it was wise and good: if fanatics and infidels object the pious will not. The rights of brothers are not equal.

In accordance with this law of primogeniture, Isaac attempted to give the patriarchal blessing to Esau the elder brother. But Jacob got it by deceiving him, but in pronouncing that blessing, Isaac gave to Jacob all his brethren for servants, saying, "Be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee." No matter how plainly divine truth be revealed, they whose hearts are not right will not receive it.

It was in accordance with this law of primogeniture, that God said unto Cain, "Abel's desire shall be unto thee, and thou shalt rule over him." Gen. iv. 7.

A decree of election was announced to Rebekah, before Jacob and Esau were born, before they had done any good or evil, Rom. ix. 11; so that we might know that salvation is not of works, but of election—of the mere good pleasure of God, who has said, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;" and "who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." Isa. xli. 10. Rom. ix. 18.

The apostle cites this instance as a demonstration of the doctrine of election, and he cites it by divine authority, that every mouth may be stopped, and that every fallen man may feel that he is in the hand of God, as clay is in the hand of the potter.

31. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

The extortion of Jacob and his inhospitality to his brother, can not be justified. But as he was yet an impenitent sinner, an unconverted man, we may account for his conduct from natural principles. Gen. xxviii. 16. As it was God's revealed purpose to give the birthright and pre-eminence to Jacob, he went to bringing it about by this means; for we see that he uses the free agency of men whether good or bad, in accomplishing his purposes, as he used Judas in accomplishing the crucifixion of his Son.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VERSE 14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east.

It is not easy for even Christians to appreciate the oneness of the family relation as affirmed in the Scriptures. There was a oneness between the first man and his posterity, by which his act was their act, just as really as it was his: not by transfer, but by estimation—by imputation.

By the first sin of him who was our representative—the federal head of the human race, and who acted for us, we all became as guilty of sin, as he did; which is the reason of its being imputed or reckoned to us. Had he not been our federal head and representative, his sin would not have been imputed, or reckoned to us.

By the marriage relation the parties become one flesh. They are not one man nor one woman, but one pair; and like the Siamese twins, they are one flesh, because God has constituted them such; which we are slow to understand, although it is plainly revealed. If it were not so, there would be no crime of incest in marrying a mother-in-law, a wife's sister, or a father's wife; neither would there have been any such prohibitions, as the affinity prohibitions in the 18th of Leviticus.

Such is the family oneness that when Jacob's posterity increased, and spread abroad, the promised blessing was fulfilled, that *he* had increased, and spread abroad.

Although Jacob obtained the blessing of Isaac by deception, yet as it was pronounced by authority, and in the name of the Lord, it could not be recalled nor changed. Eve was deceived by the serpent into eating the forbidden fruit; but this did not alter the crime, nor prevent the curse; Israel was deceived by the Gibeonites; but this did not make void the treaty with Joshua and the Elders of Israel; the young prophet was deceived by the old prophet, when he went back with him, and ate bread and drank water in Samaria. 1 Kings xiii. 24.

A man has no right to be deceived—he must not believe any thing unless he have evidence of its truth: he is responsible for his belief.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VERSE 4. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock.

These seem to be the only ones he considered as his wives: although he had two more they were not equal with these, being only bondwomen; and their sons would be really bondmen if Jacob were disposed to account them so.

29. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

What is said is not always what is revealed; but what is intended is revealed. Here Laban was told not to do any evil to Jacob; and so he understood it.

In that day wicked men often were prophets—had revelations made to them. Gen. xx. 3.

Laban came with a force sufficient to injure him. But God had promised Jacob protection, and would faithfully perform it.

We see that the Lord deals with men as with moral agents. He charged Laban not to speak to Jacob either good or bad; or not to do him any injury. And that was sufficient. He used no physical force. He might have slain or crippled him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

VERSE 4. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

The brethren of Joseph had no right to be grieved with their father for his love to Joseph the son of his beloved Rachel; nor to hate Joseph for it; for he loved them all, and was doing well toward all of them.

As God has seen good to create a world in which means hold so prominent a place, we must subscribe to their necessity in other things as well as in eating and drinking to sustain our lives.

The love and partiality of Jacob toward Joseph was an indispensable means of accomplishing his being sent down to Egypt to provide for the preservation of the whole household,

and to fulfill the prophecy concerning their sojourn in Egypt. But for the accomplishment of these, that partiality and that hatred had not been. Ps. lxxvi. 10. Gen. xv. 13, 14.

If it be true, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, then it was true that they could not speak peaceably to him; for there was no peace in their hearts toward him; and they only spake from what was in their hearts, unless they used hypocrisy. If in hypocrisy they had spoken words of peace, they would really have been words of ill-will.

The person whose heart is full of ill-will to any one is unable to sanctify his own soul, and is, therefore, physically unable to speak peaceably to him in sincerity; for as he thinketh in his heart so is he to thee—a friend, or an enemy. Prov. xxiii. 6, 7. Gal. v. 17. John vi. 63, 65. Therefore they could not believe; because, etc. Isa. vi. 9, 10. John. xii. 39.

20. Come now therefore, and let us slay him.

God, in infinite mercy and loving-kindness to them, was raising Joseph to be a great benefactor to them, and a great honor to their family, and they are filled with wrath about it; engage in persecuting him, and conspire to kill him. If they had been allowed to kill him, then all the blessings which were to be bestowed upon them through him had been defeated. All their injuries to Joseph would have been injuries to themselves, but for the counteracting providence of Him who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and to work together for good even to persecutors and opposers. Paul afterward enjoyed the gospel he had tried to destroy. If the dreams of Joseph were of any significance—any importance—it could only be so because they were revelations from God, were prophecies. If they were not prophecies, but the mere vagrant thoughts of sleep, his brethren could not have any cause of trouble on account of them. Their concern therefore proved that they apprehended that they were revelations. Whatever construction may have been put upon his dreams, their conduct showed great impiety. "*We will see what will become of his dreams.*" as if they would defy the infinite Jehovah. 2 Kings xviii. 30, 33. It shows great blindness and hardness for frail mortals to think that they can counteract Divine Providence, and defeat his counsels.

But they did see what became of his dreams, when they prostrated themselves before him as humble suppliants. Gen. xliv. 14.

How clearly is it verified: My counsel shall stand; and I will do all my pleasure.

The means used by Joseph's brethren to prevent the accomplishment of his dreams, were just the best means to secure their accomplishment. It always is so, and always will be. Acts xiii. 27. Thus God brings good out of evil. How surprising is the divine goodness and long-suffering, in giving these wicked men the benefits which they endeavored to prevent.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

VERSE 1. And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites.

3. And his master saw that the Lord *was* with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

These Ishmaelites are also called Midianites; which leads to the conclusion that they were descendants of Ishmael, and inhabitants of Midian. Being descendants of Abraham they would naturally have traditions of the Abrahamic covenant, and some ideas of theology, such as appear in the book of Job. There does not appear to be any evil imputed to Potiphar for purchasing and retaining as a bondman this favorite child of God. His brethren did great evil in stealing and selling their innocent brother, and suffered afflictions on account of it. Gen. xlii. 21; xlv. 16. But his master is blessed in holding him as a bondman, as Nebuchadnezzar was in holding Daniel. The patriarchs also shared largely in the results of the evil they had done, in the benefits which accrued to them from it.

21. But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

This serves as a comment on 1 Cor. vii. 21. "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it." But his situation among strangers, exiled from his doting father, who loved him, must have been painful indeed, as he was of tender age, being only seventeen years of age. But he was greatly assuaged, by communion with God, and by the blessings which always attended him.

Another advantage of his position was, that he was removed from the bitter envy and persecution of his treacherous brethren. It was surely no honor to them, that their brother was better off among strangers, than he could be with them. Indeed he found a greater reward, enjoyed more prosperity, rose to higher honor and dignity, than he could among them. If we are only careful to love and serve God with all our heart, any situation will be a paradise. Dan. iii. 27, 28. We need not indulge any apprehension that all things will not work together for our good. Matt. vi. 33. Rom. viii. 28.

CHAPTER XLII.

VERSE 21. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

The upbraidings of a guilty conscience are not the lightest of the judgments that await the sinner. If he knew beforehand how his sin would bite like a serpent and sting like an adder, he would not so lightly commit it.

36. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

They were seemingly adverse to him, but they were really for his good—for the greatest advantage both of himself and his family.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

VERSE 22. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

There is no more difficulty in understanding this passage than there is in many others, in which prophecy is expressed in the *præter tense*. It was not what Israel had done, but it

was what he would do. Israel spake this prophecy, and Israel fulfilled it in the days of Joshua.

It is no uncommon thing for the inspired writers to speak of things that are not, as though they were. Rom. iv. 17. The Psalmist many hundred years before the event, spake in the past tense of the crucifixion: They pierced my hands and my feet. Ps. xxii. 1, 8, 16.

If Jacob could spread abroad to the west and the south, by his posterity, Gen. xxviii. 14; thus he could, by his posterity, dispossess the Amorite. The oneness of family relation is not appreciated.

For some reason Jacob gave a double portion to Joseph, in the persons of his children, Ephraim and Manasseh.

CHAPTER XLIX.

VERSE 8. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

Every man must have his trials to show what he is. He can not be prepared for retribution without it. It must require some humility and devotion to God to praise their brother Judah, when they had to bow down before him. To love and praise him still would infer a degree of grace which some seem now to have been destitute of at that time.

If his hand should be in the necks of his enemies, he was to rule over them. If it is said that these things should be, then they should be, and he that finds fault with it replies against God, for the inequality among men. Ps. lxxv. 7.

CHAPTER L.

VERSE 5. My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me.

Agreeably to the construction of the preceding verse, that Jacob acted by his posterity in dispossessing the Amorites, so

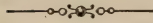
now he acts by his ancestry in procuring his burying place. Men do things by agents.

When Jacob charged his sons about his interment, he did not speak of the grave that he had digged; but he spake of the cave that Abraham bought, Gen. xlix. 30; but when Joseph spake of it to Pharaoh, he spake of it as if Jacob had provided it; because there was no need of Pharaoh's being made acquainted with its particular location, and the manner of procuring it; it being sufficient for him to know that it was in Canaan. Joseph did not give an accurate statement to Pharaoh, for it was not required. The family vault was provided in Canaan by Jacob's ancestors, and it is a maxim in law, *Qui facit per aliter, facit per se*. We ate the fruit in Eden by our ancestor. So Joseph was the doer of all that was done in the prison, xxxix. 22. So Solomon built the temple by his workmen; so David slew Uriah with the sword of Ammon; so we ate the forbidden fruit.

20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Thus we perceive that different agents may act in the same event, and one be good and the other evil, according to the motives which actuate them. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 1 Chron. xxi. 1. It is a very edifying doctrine to the friends of God, and it is cheering to their faith, that evil agents can do nothing but what God sees best to have them do, for then his kingdom, his children, and his purposes are safe. Ps. lxxvi. 10. Rom. viii. 28. Dan. v. 23. John xv. 5; xix. 11.

EXODUS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Now these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.

If every man and his household came, then were there none left in Canaan; whereas, the language is to be limited and confined to the subject of the discourse, which was the people of the Hebrews—the family of Jacob.

It is also written, Gen. xli. 48, that Joseph gathered all the food of the seven years which was in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities. Did he lay up all the food? If he laid it all up, then the people starved—the whole nation perished. So in the passage before us, if every man and his household came with Jacob, then the population of the whole world was assembled in Egypt. Take another illustration: In verse 22 of this chapter it is written, "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive." We all know that the king did intend only that the sons of the Hebrews should be cast into the river, and not their own sons. Its not being so expressed did not alter the injunction: the meaning was evident enough.

The apostle John said, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." 1 John v. 19. If the whole world were still lying in wickedness, then all the saints, all the children of God, were in their sins, and under eternal death, which is to deny the gospel.

It is also written, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." If then every soul that sinneth shall die, then as all have sinned, all must perish; and then there can be no gospel, no salvation. Surely Arminians are reckless.

It must seem strange that there can be theologians who strenuously insist upon receiving such words in their most unlimited sense. The Pelagians and Arminians found their denominations upon this preposterous construction of such passages.

In 1 Cor. xii. 7, the apostle speaks of the miraculous influences of the Spirit, as given to every man who had spiritual gifts in the church, but there are those who apply it to every sinner, making all men to be prophets, or workers of miracles. Whereas the phrase "every man" means no more than such brethren as had these miraculous gifts. A similar limitation must be applied to Rom. xii. 3-6. 1 John ii. 2.

This principle of an unlimited construction of these words, as is contended for by Arminians, would save all the world and destroy all the church. For it is written of God, that he will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, and that every man shall have praise of God. What then can hinder all men from being saved? It is also written, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die, and that God will by no means clear the guilty." As all **are** guilty, and none can be cleared, then all must be lost. 1 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 5. Ezek. xviii. 20. Exod. xxxiv. 7.

Such terms "all" and "every" are generally to be taken in a limited sense, as is proved by the context.

12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.

Poor dependent creatures ought not to think of thwarting divine purposes; for God has said, "My counsel shall stand; and I will do all my pleasure;" and we are taught, that we are in his hand as clay is in the potter's hand, and the opposition we make to his purposes will only promote them. The patriarchs put Joseph out of the way, to see what would become of his dreams; but their efforts only fulfilled those dreams.

It is worthy of remark, that the antecedents to the pronoun they in this verse are not designated, or who afflicted them, or who grew. These references are left to the judgment of the reader. It is not difficult to decide who was afflicted, and who grew.

22. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river.

The Egyptians could not interpret the words, *every son* to mean that any more than the sons of Hebrews were to be so dealt with. They knew that it was to be limited to the subject.

It is true that Pharaoh so charged all his people, which would require them to destroy their own sons, if they had not understood the command in a limited or restricted sense.

It is therefore our duty to consider the subject of discourse, and the object of the speaker. By doing so, we can understand how the words *repent*, *all*, and *every*, as used by the inspired writers, are, in certain cases, to be restricted.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi.

Of the house of Levi, is equal to saying, of the tribe of Levi. The father and mother of Moses were members of the tribe of Levi.

10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son.

I. e. her adopted son; else we make it prove the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The rule above laid down about interpreting the Scriptures applies here. The context and the subject often require that a limited construction be put upon words; for as Moses was the son of Jochebed, he could not be the son of any other woman.

So the prophecy of 2 Sam. vii. 13, He shall build a house for my name, is likewise to be interpreted with limitation, He shall cause to be built a house for my name.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

If it should seem strange that Moses inquired what name he should use for the Divine Being when he should deliver his message to the Hebrews, it should be remembered, that they for a long time had been under no advantages for keeping knowledge in theology. As they had no Scriptures, no prophets, nor religious teachers, their minds may well have been dark on subjects familiar to us. Exod. xxxii. 1-4. They were brought up in the midst of heathenism and idolatry, and abject servitude. Neither they nor Moses could be familiar with religious subjects. The Lord then, as stated in the preceding verses, gave Moses the name, *Aeie aser Aeie*. These words

can not be translated I am what I am, if there be no present tense in the Hebrew. In the next verse, for the word now under consideration, a different word is used, and one that has relation to the future, viz. *Ieve*, and adds it to *Aleim*, which two words are here rendered, the Lord God. That the Hebrew verb *Aeie*, and *Aeve*, and *Ieve* or *Jeve*, which last we pronounce Jehovah, and which refers to the future tense as well as to being or existing, we must admit; because Eve and Solomon evidently so used it, Gen. iv. 1; Eccl. xi. 3, in its original sense. This word is admitted to signify the divine continued existence. As this is no doubt correct it is natural to believe that it also refers to past and present existence as well as to future existence; for which we have authority in the Greek where it is translated, who was, and is, and is to come, the Almighty. Rev. i. 8.

If the word *ieue* be a compound of the present participle being, and will be, as Mr. Hutchinson and Dr. Parkhurst agree that it is, then this Hebrew word has been rightly interpreted in the note upon the declaration of Eve. Gen. iv. 1. And then the word as a divine name may naturally be taken to apply to the idea of self-existence, although this could not have been the original meaning of the word when used in relation to finite things. But as it did signify continued being in a finite sense, it could be used in an accommodated sense after its new appropriation, to signify the divine self-existence. But this appropriation of the word, would not prevent its being used in its natural and original sense, as Gen. iv. 1, Eccl. xi. 3.

This interpretation will receive support from the evident fact, that this is not the form of the Hebrew verb in the future tense which never takes *vau* before the last radical. When it thus has the *vau* the meaning is being will be, being both the present participle and the future tense.

Those who have supposed that this name *ieue* is the only name that can now lawfully be applied to the Divine Being, have not well considered the subject. It was not given as an exclusive name but only as a memorial name, which office it would perform if it had never been used by any other than Moses, but left in the places in which he had put it; for there it would have been recognized by every reader of the sacred records.

But what was given as a memorial name was not *ieue*, but this, the Lord God of your fathers, etc. This is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations. This does not mean that this name was to be exclusively used; for all the inspired writers from Moses to John have used others Exod. iii. 11; iv. 20. Isa. xlvii. 4; xlviii. 2; liv. 5.

It is worthy of remark, that the Spirit of Inspiration has left opportunity or occasion for those who desire it, 2 Cor. xi. 12, to contend for Polytheism; here he speaks of God, as if there were more than one, and even as if there were four, viz: the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Here are four names which afford as good an argument for four Divinities as men of a certain stamp are satisfied to take as foundation for their systems of doctrine. It is true the passage itself contains its own limitation, affirming this is my name forever, and this is my memorial to all generations; proving that those four names all relate to one being, who bears them all.

16. Go and gather the elders of Israel together.

This is an instructive passage, and one that establishes Presbyterianism, for in verse 15 Moses was commanded to make this communication to the children of Israel, and here he is commanded to make it to the elders. The explanation is that the elders were the representatives of the people.

No man can help believing in representation, who believes the gospel. Adam represented his posterity, Christ his people, and the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ.

A similar beam of light is contained in chapter xix. 3, 7. Moses is commanded, "Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel * * * And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words." When Moses told it to the elders, he told it to the people, because the elders were the representatives of the people.

We are hereby enabled to understand Matt. xviii., and to know that Congregationalism is an error.

17. And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt.

Two considerations belong to the exegesis of this passage. The one is that there was an implied condition in the promise. Jer. xviii. 9, 10. Num. xiv. 34. Jonah iii. 10. The other is that promises were made to them not as individuals, but as communities; and although only Joshua and Caleb, of all the adults to whom this promise was made, realized it, yet the nation realized in their children whom they represented, and who represented them. The descendants of Israel will yet receive the promises made to their ancestors thousands of years ago. Rom. xi. 26. Preceding generations may have perished, but there is a generation soon to arise that will receive the promise.

22. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor, etc.

Ask of her neighbor. Taking every in the extensive sense that some reckless persons do would destroy the object of this favor to Israel, for then the Egyptian women borrowing of the Hebrews would impoverish them. If the Hebrews only asked these donations, they did not borrow them, they only asked them, so that they would go on the score of donations.

The translators ought not needlessly to have put it on a less favorable ground. But we will excuse them, as they could not think of everything, and as they have done so exceedingly well upon the whole.

When Moses and the elders were sent to Pharaoh for leave to go three days' journey into the wilderness to worship, if he Pharaoh had consented, they would have been bound to return. But he utterly refused. And being followed by judgments, he thrust them out for fear that he and his people would all be destroyed; and here were no conditions—nothing about return. Although Pharaoh had oppressed and wronged them by cruel bondage and the murder of their children; yet as they were subjects and bondmen, they were not allowed to indulge in mutiny or rebellion. They were numerous enough, and having the Lord on their side, it would have been easy for them to vanquish the Egyptians and expatriate themselves, but this impiety was not permitted them. Nearly a hundred years previous to this, Pharaoh said, "Behold, the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." And now they must have been much more able to have overcome their masters. But such immorality as children rising and killing parents, and servants rising and killing masters, was not permitted. Israel were not permitted either to rise against them, nor leave their service without permission from the king. God could easily have delivered them without Pharaoh's permission, but this would not have impressed upon them the lesson of obligation to domestic loyalty, without which no people and no family can be happy, quiet, moral or prosperous. The reverence, submission and loyalty, that the Hebrews owed to the king, and to the Egyptians their masters, is shown in the code of laws subsequently given to Israel. "Thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; for thou wast a stranger in his land." Deut. xxiii. 7. In the distress of famine, Israel took shelter in Egypt, were received to hospitality, were nourished and preserved, and must never forget the obligation thus created. Although the Egyptians subsequently did them great injustice, that injustice did

not and could not cancel their obligation to gratitude for former favors.

God lays down the universal law and obligation of subjects and citizens to rulers. "The powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. xiii. 1. If a government be oppressive and unjust like that which the Hebrews suffered under, the Lord will provide a way of relief for them when he sees best, and in a way consistent with the moral obligations and piety of his people. Until he sees good thus to provide deliverance, they must show their meekness, and wait under their afflictions, and never do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just—that do so.

On this principle it is that children may never condemn their parents. On the same principle it is that domestics must honor and obey the head of the family, not only the good and gentle, but also the harsh and rough, for one wrong does not justify another. If a man wrong me, I may not wrong him. I have no remedy—I may not wrong him, nor do him any private injury, no, nor hate him. This is what is laid down in the gospel as Christian morality, and a constituent of the Christian character.

A Christian never can have occasion to do wrong, as to cheat, or falsify the truth; never, never can have recourse to such expedients, except when faith fails him and Satan gets advantage over him.

It is true Egypt was destroyed, the king and his army were drowned in the sea; but it was not by the parricidal hand of the Hebrews, their loyal and pious subjects. It was by the hand of God against whom Egypt was in rebellion; and who never teaches his children to disobey their parents, nor servants their masters, nor subjects their rulers. The divine moral code is one for all these relations, and requires fidelity.

If Moses slew an Egyptian who was abusing a Hebrew, he did it as the king's son, and one of the royal family, and not by divine authority. After he became a prophet, he never abused or even punished an Egyptian. And in that instance he was without help from God or man, and fled for his life.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 8. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

A word is sometimes used quite out of its common signification, without rendering the sense obscure, as is voice for evidence in this place.

20. And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt.

And afterward he sent them back to Jethro. Exod. xviii. 2. He set out to return, but relinquished it.

21. And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go.

The reason why he would so harden Pharaoh's heart is given in other places, as chap. x. 1, 2; xiv. 4, 17, 18. We may say, that God saw it would be good and right thus to harden his heart, or he would not have done it. If it were good and right and necessary, then he ought not to have omitted it. He who wishes that he would not do what he sees to be good and right and necessary, wishes him to do wrong, to commit sin, to cease to be God, and to become a fallen and degraded being. He that can so wish is an enemy of God.

If God said that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, and then said, chap. vii. 13, that he had done it, every one who honors God, who fears and loves him, is satisfied without another word; for how can he have a doubt about it, either as to the fact or righteousness of it? To have any doubt about the fact, would be worthy only of an infidel; and to entertain any doubt of its righteousness, would be worthy only of an enemy. What he does is right and glorious; for it proceeds from his infinite perfections.

If the motive for hardening his heart were to get him honor, then it was a good work, a holy and a righteous work; for how else could it get him honor among the bright intelligences of heaven? They would all see it, and understand it. And if it

were not good and just, it would get him no honor. Therefore we must see and know that it was good, and wise, and just; for if his perfections are infinite, he can do nothing that is not both good and wise.

If another reason for hardening Pharaoh's heart was that there might be occasion for all the mighty works that followed. And that the Hebrews might tell them to their children, that they might know the Lord; and learn to love and fear him. Then they must have been good.

God as a sovereign judge had a right to do any thing he pleased to do with Pharaoh, and with all sinners. They have no rights: they are all outlaws; and he owes them nothing but retribution. If he does better by any, it is only of grace—of sovereign grace to the guilty—goodness to outlaws.

He might, instead of sparing him so long upon the throne of Egypt, have cut him off from life, and from all privileges here, and sent him down to the pit forever, instead of sparing him for awhile, and sending prophets to him to warn him, and teach him his duty to God and to his own soul.

If the Lord spared his life for awhile, and retained him in the world, to accomplish some high and holy and glorious purposes by him before he cut him off, and sent him to the pit forever, it was a great mercy to him; for although he was hardened in the time he remained, he was not hardened as he would have been had he been cut off from life: for when sinners are finally cut off, they are completely hardened, all restraining grace being entirely removed.

Instead then of its being any disadvantage to him to spare and harden him for a while in life, it was a mercy.

If he does not cut off all sinners to-day, and send them to the eternal pit, it is only of his long-suffering.

If Pharaoh had been wise for himself, he would have obeyed the Lord, and let Israel go, especially after Moses had proved his divine mission by giving miraculous evidence of it.

He knew that God spake by Moses. The miracles proved it. His wise men confessed it, saying to him, This is the finger of God. He confessed it in asking Moses to pray for him, and in saying, The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. After making these concessions why did he not sit at Moses' feet, and learn divine things as the Eunuch did to Philip, and Apollos to Aquila? He sinned against light and knowledge and against his own conscience.

How many sinners younger than Pharaoh, and less wicked than he, are cut off in their sins, and sent to the pit, having all restraint withdrawn, and perfectly hardened? for the sinner at death has all restraint removed forever; which is a much greater hardening than Pharaoh experienced.

If God harden some sinners partially before he cuts them off finally, and when he has good and wise reasons for it, why should it be necessary to plead his cause, and justify his ways to men?

If the Lord can harden sinners at death, he can before death. Pharaoh confessed that God was righteous. He that does not, is more hardened and wicked than Pharaoh.

It is not necessary to suppose that such hardening of sinners infers any thing more than withholding restraint, neither can we conceive of any other: for if every sinner is entirely depraved so as to be without any piety, any faith, any holiness, he can not be made any worse only by removing or withholding restraint. See Gen. xx. 6.

And when restraint is withheld, man's depravity flows out freely and fully without needing any increase.

If this removing of restraint be a cause sufficient for the effect, then it is unphilosophical to add another.

We are taught that the Sovereign of the universe works by agents and by means. He employs evil men and evil angels to accomplish such events as good agents are not suitable for. See Job i. 12. Rev. xx. 3. Lev. xxii. 53. John xix. 11. 1 Chron. xxi. 1. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1.

But we know that evil agents can not do them without divine permission. Satan could not afflict Job without permission. Neither could Pilate do any thing against the Lord of Glory, until it was given him from above. John xix. 11.

If Pharaoh's heart was hardened only by withholding restraint, then there can be no difficulty in the doctrine of sovereignty in its exercise, having mercy on whom he will, and hardening whom he will; or if it were hardened by evil agents, there is no more difficulty about it than about any other work done by evil agents. Rev. xvii. 17. 2 Chron. xviii. 21. We are here enabled to confute a dogma, of some, that when a command is given, power is always given to obey it, for here it seems rather that power is taken away. Deut. ii. 30. Matt. xiii. 10-14. Ezek. xviii. 31.

If sinners be dead in trespasses and sins, then their depravity must be full and complete, and can only be capable of increase seemingly by withholding restraint.

Were it not for such restraint earth would be a pandemonium. So the Lord's Prayer, "Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil;" we must have the divine hand to restrain and keep us or we shall be carried away.

When sinners are delivered to Satan, he blinds and deceives them, so that their depravity flows out without restraint. When the Lord hardens by evil agents, then it is said, "The Lord

hardens; because those agents can not act without him." Gen. xlv. 5. Ps. lxxvi. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 11.

24. And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.

The Lord showed him that he was in danger of death for neglect of circumcision.

29. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the children of Israel.

Elders and people were both as one, for the elders were the officers and representatives of the people, the standing rulers in the church. They were the rulers of the people before Moses and Aaron came to them. Elders and congregation also are synonymous when church government is the subject. In our standards these words have a similar variety of significations. When church is used for the body of the communicants as to their number it comprehends all the communicants, male and female, minors and adults. When it refers to government it means the elders. When it refers to election, it means the adult male members. So in the Mosaic law, when one was to be stoned to death, the male members only were meant as the instruments. It would have been unseemly for delicate females to engage in so coarse an employment.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1. And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

If there was an implied promise of returning after holding the feast, it was not expressed. But it was natural for Pharaoh to fear that they would not return, and he was not willing to part with their service. Chap. i. 9, 10.

This is the first message delivered to Pharaoh upon the subject, and the memorial name, chap. iii. 15, is not used, but only a small part of it; so that the construction given it in the note on iii. 15, is sustained. And the memorial name is answered, not by continued repetition, but by its abiding upon the tablets of revelation.

2. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

The name God was probably familiar to Pharaoh and to other nations. It is the name used by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis, and to the fourth verse of the second chapter. It is the name used both by Eve and the serpent in the third chapter. This name God, and the one signifying the Almighty were the only names in common use among the nations. This was the first time that Pharaoh had heard this new name. Moses did not use it alone, but to be understood by Pharaoh, he used the other name God with it, which was known to him. Notwithstanding this new name for God, as the name that was familiar to him was used with it, he could be at no loss about the meaning of the command. But Pharaoh might with his deceitful heart feign ignorance of the authority which he intended to disregard, as it came in a name that he was entirely unacquainted with; therefore, dropping the latter name, and using only the former, he replied, "Who is this being will be that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not being will be, neither will I let Israel go."

3. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert.

Here the new name is dropped and the well-known name is used, as if they would get clear of his objection.

4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

Words change their meaning in process of time. In 1613, when our translation was first published, the word let signified to hinder as well as not hinder. And it signifies both now; but its general signification is that of permit, or not hinder. King Edward VI., of England, has recorded in his journal that, on a certain occasion when his fleet was attacked in the harbor, "That they could not get out to meet the enemy in the open sea, being let by contrary winds."

Many other words have changed their meaning since our version was made, so as to cause some obscurity: such as wot, wist, prevent, offend.

Moses and Aaron, although subjects of Pharaoh and bound to obedience, did not obey this command, to go to their tasks. They were obeying an express revelation from God. As

obedience to civil rulers is required by the divine law, nothing short of a divine warrant can make an exception to the obligation to obey rulers; as the laws of nature yield only to the divine power in miracles. Thus the apostles had divine authority for preaching the gospel in opposition to the injunction of magistrates. Acts v. 28, 29. Although Moses and Aaron as prophets had this dispensation, the rest of the people had it not; but were under obligation to the edicts and penalties of the magistrates, notwithstanding their injustice. Verses 7, 8, 9.

21. And they said unto them, The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh.

The people ought not to have thus accused these prophets who were sent by God, and who were seeking their good. These afflictions were not caused by these prophets; but were incidental to the means of their deliverance. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Matt. v. 39. Rom. xii. 17-19. 1 Pet. ii. 18.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 3. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.

Here is direct and positive authority for what is said in these comments on this subject. The patriarchs were entirely ignorant of this divine name. They were familiar with the word as it was in common use, a familiar word in their language. But they never thought it as a divine name: it was as such unknown to them. This is given on divine authority. It was presumption then in Mr. Canne to insert in the marginal notes, by way of comment, the word *compatively*; for it was not known at all to the patriarchs until it was revealed to Moses in Midian. This is certain because declared in the word; so that there can be no doubt. And then the context with all the attending circumstances go to confirm it: for when Moses asked for his name, he asked for what he did not know; for if he knew it already, why did he ask it? Mr. Canne seems to have supposed, that, as Eve used the word, Gen. iv. 1, she used it, not as a common word of the Hebrew tongue, but as a divine name, as all others seem to have erroneously sup-

posed. And Mr. Canne seems to have supposed that as Moses used it, Gen. ii. 4, xxvii. 20, 27, that therefore it was known to both Isaac and Jacob. But as it is here expressly affirmed that it was unknown to them, we learn that Moses used it by chronological anticipation; for as all Israel had learned this new name from Moses, he could use it in writing for them. When Jacob and Isaac spake of the Almighty, Moses could use any name for him that his readers understood, with propriety, although both Isaac and Jacob were ignorant of it.

Modern Jews have considered Jehovah an ineffable name, which it is unlawful to speak; and when they meet with it in the scriptures they pronounce Adoni, which only signifies Lord, and is used for a human or a divine ruler. They esteem the name Jehovah to be the most solemn and sacred name which is applied to him.

Although all the names of the Father are also applied to the Son; yet when distinction of persons is made, as in several instances, the name Jehovah is applied to the Father, and Adoni, Son, Messenger or some other is applied to the Son. Ps. ii. 2, 4, 7, 12; ex. 1, 2, 4, 5. Isa. liii. 6, 10. Mal. iii. 1.

11. Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Here is no intimation of a return; but implies a final departure—a release from his service.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 5. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.

The deliverance of the people from the Egyptian yoke is here also without any conditions—purports final deliverance. The great and terrible wonders wrought upon Egypt by the hand of the Lord; and in favor of his people, were not without cause; for while he was accomplishing their deliverance, he was at the same time teaching them the knowledge of God, which was of infinite importance to both Israel and Egypt.

12. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

The meaning of a passage may not depend altogether upon

the precise words used; for the subject and the context necessarily direct us to the meaning intended, which sometimes is different from the literal meaning. In this verse the meaning would not have been varied if it had been said, And Aaron's serpent swallowed up their serpents, the context settling the meaning.

How much reality, and how much deception there may have been in these seeming miracles of the magicians, it is not for us to decide. But it is evident that they appeared to the beholders to be real miracles. As Moses and Aaron did not dispute the reality, we may take them to have been apparently miracles, not by the creation of rods into serpents, but by conveying serpents or the appearance of serpents, and stealthily conveying away the rods which they had thrown down, or seemed to have thrown down. This is not inconsistent with the inspired narrative, that the magicians cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; for it is common in scripture language, to call things by the name of that which they appear to be. Abraham looked, and behold three men stood by him. Gen. xviii. 2. Although they were not men, but were messengers from heaven; yet the inspired writer does not scruple to call them men; for that was what they appeared to be. And speaking by Amos ix. 3 the Lord says, "And though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea." Nothing can be hidden from his sight. But any thing so far out of the way of vision, might seem to be so; and therefore God speaks of it as being so, for he calleth things that are not as though they were. Rom. iv. 17. It may not be supposed that God wrought the miracle of their serpents; for that would be an attestation in favor of them, and against himself. Satan can work miracles when permitted. Job i. 16, 19. Matt. xxiv. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 9. Eph. ii. 2.

If Satan has such power, then it is evident that he may have assisted the magicians in producing those appearances. God, however, in kindness to Pharaoh, and in faithfulness to himself, proved his superiority, and put the magicians to the blush, by causing Aaron's rod to swallow up theirs. Thus he maintained the superiority of the miracle wrought by his servants; so that Pharaoh was deprived of every excuse for disobedience.

16. And thou shalt say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and, behold, hitherto thou wouldst not hear.

Hear is used in the sense of to obey, as well as to hear. John ix. 27. Pharaoh would not obey.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 11. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses.

Here also we are dependent on the context for the meaning of a word, and learn that words are not always to be taken in their literal sense. The frogs were to depart by dying off. They were not to go away; but they were to depart in another sense of not being continued there by a new supply after the present stock died.

13. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

The Lord granted the prayer of Pharaoh, v. 8, to remove this affliction, on his promise to let Israel go, although he knew that Pharaoh would not do it.

18. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not.

This attempt of the magicians to produce lice, seems to show that they depended on some agency of evil spirits to accomplish this also. And this gives some ground for the opinion that the other works that they did were really performed by evil agency. But God here suspended the power of those evil spirits. Rev. xx. 1, 3.

19. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, this is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

He hearkened not to Moses and Aaron because of his stubborn rebellious spirit.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 15, 16. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Here the goodness of God shines with peculiar luster; for

the manifestation of himself to men is an infinite favor, being calculated to do them infinite good, if they will make good use of it. If they do not make good use of it, it is their own fault.

If Pharaoh was raised to manifest God to men, we may take him as a sample for all others.

The benevolence of God is exercised not only in the individuals brought upon the stage of life, but also in all the providences concerning them, whether they be good or evil beings; for it is written, "That he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and as he is holy, it follows that the counsel of his will is also holy.

In all his dealings with wicked angels and men he is as holy and wise as in his dealings with Pharaoh. If it be asked by one who is more inquisitive than wise and reverent, why one man is elected and not his neighbor? we may reply, that he has not told us; and therefore we know not, except the general reason, that so it seemed good in his sight. We may also remark, that the reasons being different in different cases, if they were written, the world could not contain the books that should be written. John xxi. 25.

General reasons are sufficient and satisfactory as, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." We are told reasons for the election of Pharaoh to evil, and of the election of Paul to good. The one was to show the glory and greatness of God, and the other was to encourage sinners to come to Christ in hope. 1 Tim. i. 15.

19. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field.

How striking does this mercy appear with which judgment was mingled upon one who was so evil.

27. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.

Confessing the truth, or knowing the truth, is of no avail for one who does not repent, do works meet for repentance, and seek unto God for pardon and mercy. Here he failed just as those evil spirits did who said, "We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Mark i. 24. To hold the truth in unrighteousness is rather unto condemnation; for it is written, "The wrath of God is revealed against them;" Rom. i. 18; they are self-condemned, as it is written, "Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wicked servant." Luke xii. 47.

30. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God.

Yet Moses would, notwithstanding, spread forth his hands unto the Lord, that mercy might be shown to Pharaoh, and that the thunder and hail might cease. See note on chap. viii. 13.

35. As the Lord had spoken by Moses.

The Lord had spoken by Moses, that Pharaoh and his people would not yet fear the Lord God.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 1. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these my signs before him.

The certainty of the failure of means used with the wicked have no influence with the servants of God to discourage them in their use. See verse 3, and chap. ix. 30. The wise and good will obey God, do what he has commanded, and leave the event with him. The means used with incorrigible sinners are necessary to fill their cup.

I have hardened his heart, does not preclude the idea that Satan did it, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, 1 Chron. xxi. 1; for nothing in the whole universe can occur without the divine agency, for he only is king and sovereign. When Joseph's brethren sent him into Egypt, Joseph told them that the Lord did it. Gen. xlv. 5, 8. Jer. xxiii. 2, 3. So when the wicked Jews, with the rulers, slew the Lord, the hand of God did it. Isa. liii. 10. Acts iii. 18; iv. 28. Rev. ii. 11. Heb. xii. 6. Isa. xlv. 7. 1 Sam. xvi. 14. Isa. xxxvii. 24, 26.

As it is written, "Without me ye can do nothing," which must equally be true of all creatures, John xv. 5, we may therefore believe that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh by the agency of evil spirits, according to 2 Chron. xviii. 20-22.

This doctrine is replete with glory to God; for as it was done to get him honor upon Pharaoh, Exod. xiv. 4, and as reason teaches us, that the infinitely wise Jehovah would not do any thing to get him honor and glory which is not calculated to produce such result, therefore this hardening of Pharaoh's heart is both honorable and glorious.

Angels and saints in heaven have intelligence of a high order, and vastly superior to us; for we see through a glass darkly, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, because we are carnal, being blinded by remaining depravity, being sanctified only in part, we partake of this blindness of heart. But when we shall emerge to the light of the heavenly mansions, we shall put off this body of death, and obtain such a hight of intelligence, as to know even as we are known.

The new beams of light will irradiate our renewed intellects, and the good and wise counsels of the glorious Sovereign, in hardening Pharaoh, and in punishing the wicked with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9, 11, will shine with new beams, and new beauties of holiness, as it is written, "And again they said, Alleluia. And the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever." Rev. xix. 1-3.

And how good, how holy and glorious then will God appear in having spared Pharaoh from the pit so long, and so long continuing his respite from perdition, and giving him admonitions and counsel from heaven, and to accomplish certain works which Pharaoh wished to accomplish, and which God saw good to indulge him in; and the raptures of the heavenly throng will kindle anew, and excite their highest anthems of praise, their liveliest joys, in ascriptions of glory to God in the highest.

This will not arise from any pleasure on account of Pharaoh's shame and misery, but it will arise from the glory of God manifested in all the transactions, which show how true and righteous are his judgments.

This is the voice of reason as well as the voice of faith, for faith relies upon what is written and says only that.

6. And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians.

The flies could not be expected to fill the houses of the Egyptians; for then there would be no room for their families. To fill their houses must be taken to mean that they will be so numerous as to render their houses uncomfortable.

In very many instances, the words of revelation must be taken with limitation, and so as to give them an expressive and obvious signification; else we shall run into all the absurdities of heretics and fanatics; as those do who hold to transubstantiation from the words this is my body; and as those do who hold to an unlimited atonement from the use of the word all, when we all know that no atonement was made for some sins,

nor for those who commit them. Mark iii. 22, 28, 29. Heb. x. 26, 27.

We are compelled thus to interpret many Scriptures with limitation. For instance, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," when surely we must except oxen and sheep, and reptiles, although they are as truly creatures as men are.

9. And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the Lord.

If Pharaoh had granted this request, agreed to the compact, they would have been under obligation to return, after holding the feast; for the Lord would not encourage the Hebrews in acting deceitfully. But as he did not agree to it, and as they did not go on that request, it ceased, and became void on their part.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 1. And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterward he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you hence altogether.

We here see the consistency of the moral code of the Scriptures. The Hebrews always obeyed Pharaoh, and never attempted any infraction of his commandments however cruel and unjust they were; unless in saving the lives of their children as far as they could clandestinely; and with the consent of the midwives, who had the command to destroy them.

Who would wish to see expunged this fundamental precept? Rom. xiii. 1-6. Titus iii. 1. For then there could be no security, and no safety in society but in an arbitrary and despotic government in which subjects submit from necessity. A free government like ours can only live by this law holding in subjection the consciences of citizens.

2. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.

It is agreed among commentators that this command signifies only to ask, not to borrow. This exculpates the Hebrews from duplicity and all unfairness.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 6. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

The evening in which the passover was to be killed, was the evening next after the thirteenth day of the new year, and ended at sunset, and when the fourteenth day, or the Sabbath commenced. The passover was killed and eaten at the commencement of the Sabbath.

The whole congregation shall kill it. It would require many thousands of paschal lambs for this passover, and yet, as all of them had one use, they are spoken of in the singular number, as if they were only one. The whole nation were to engage in the observance of it, but they were to observe it in the capacity of families. Each family, if large, were to have, kill and dress one lamb of the sheep or of the goats; if the families were small as many might unite as would be sufficed by one lamb, and act as one family in eating it.

Although the whole congregation were thus required to kill the lamb, we infer that women and children were not to engage in the actual killing which was to be done by men, and only by as many of them as were needed; but all were to unite in the feast approving and rendering all needful assistance; and all were to eat it, as many as were able.

Neither was it necessary for every man, woman and child to sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts, and upon the upper lintel; it was to be attended to by some of every family throughout the whole congregation.

Another limitation to *the whole congregation* is, that it did not include strangers and foreigners, nor any but Hebrews—none that were not circumcised. Verse 45.

To contend for a literal application of words is to pervert and wrest them, and to place them in contradiction. Matt. xviii. 17; xxvi. 26. John vi. 49, 50. Mark xi. 32. Luke vii. 30.

21. Then Moses called for all the elders.

What Moses commanded the elders was obligatory upon all the people; for the elders were their representatives and agents, and acted for them. This command to the elders was in obedience to the command in verse three, to speak to the congregation; for in speaking to the elders he spake to the congregation, and obeyed the command.

33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.

Here are no conditions of returning: they, the Egyptians, only desired to get released from the judgments of heaven.

49. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you.

One law on this point, or on this subject. This restriction is to be applied to all places where this phrase one law is used.

It is always limited to the particular statute or provision under discussion. Else it will involve contradiction; for in verse 45 it is said, "A foreign and a hired servant shall not eat thereof." How could this be consistent with one law for the Hebrew and for the stranger without this limitation?

The purport of the statute is, that no one could eat of the passover whether he were a Hebrew or not, unless he was circumcised. This is the object of the provision—the one law.

In many respects the law made a difference between Hebrews and Gentiles. No man could be king unless he was a Hebrew born. Deut. xvii. 15. No one was eligible to the priesthood, unless he were a Levite of the family of Aaron. Exod. xl. 13-15. Num. iii. 10, 38; xvi. 40.

There was a difference also in the taking of usury, in eating animals that died of themselves, and in the persons taken for bondmen.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 2. Sanctify unto me all the first-born.

The law of primogeniture making a difference in children from birth, making brothers servants to the elder brother, and giving a double portion to him, existed from the fall. But this law devoting to God the first-born of both man and beasts, arose from the death of the first-born of the Egyptians, and of their cattle; and sparing the same to the Hebrews. This sparing them, when they too might have been destroyed, forfeited them to God, and to his service. Sinners are not only under obligation to devote themselves to God from the fact that God created them, and therefore they should devote themselves to him; but they are under another obligation for re-

demption, and another for their being spared daily from the pit of eternal reprobation.

17. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.

It is observable that God uses means to accomplish divine purposes with men and to effect their good. In other words, he deals with them as with moral agents, which shows the equity and gracious kindness of his sovereignty.

The nearest route to Canaan was by the coast of the Mediterranean, and across the Isthmus of Suez. But to avoid the natural consequences of that route, he led them farther south, to the Red Sea; lest they should see war, and return to Egypt under discouragement.

By leading them through this route, he would also effect other purposes of good to them.

Although the hearts of all are in his hand, yet he does not govern his creatures by mere physical power, as if they were mere machines, but having made them free agents, he deals with them as such, and uses means to make them willing. He did not govern Pharaoh's will by mere physical power, but sent afflictions upon him to bow his stubborn will, and make him not only willing but desirous to have them go out of his land. He could have made him willing by his physical power to obey the first command. But he chose to effect it by moral means. So also he led Israel in that route in which they would be induced to pursue their journey, and secure their deliverance from bondage.

22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Having promised to deliver them, chap. iii. 8, and having undertaken it, he would not relinquish it, nor the means of effecting it. He causes his counsels to stand, and will do all his pleasure. Isa. xlv. 11. Phil. i. 6.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 5. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?

¶ Here is an acknowledgment from Pharaoh and his people, that they had let Israel go from serving them, had emancipated them.

11. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?

We here see the uncircumcised hearts of this unholy people. All the wonders, mercy, goodness and favor shown in the miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh and from bondage, had not bowed their hearts into humble submission to God, nor melted them into repentance, nor excited them to the liveliest gratitude. Their ignorant unbelief and stubbornness, were still remaining unsubdued. It was a great reproach preferred against them, "Remember, and forget not, how thou provokest the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came to this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord." Deut. ix. 7.

We are cheered and strengthened in the Lord, by the kind forbearance to the people of his covenant, and when we see how he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We learn also the motives are often ascribed to conduct, which is the natural and obvious result of such conduct, rather than the motives. It was not the motive of Moses in bringing them out of Egypt, that there were no graves there for them, but they seemed to think that his conduct would bear that construction; they chose to put that construction upon it. Such instances are common in the Scriptures, and must be noticed as a rule of interpreting the word. David illustrated this when he charged King Saul thus, "They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods." 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. He thus modestly charged Saul with the intention of doing what was only a natural consequence of his conduct, though perhaps not the motive; but whether it was the motive or not, such

was the tendency of the conduct. See also Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11.

19. And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them * * * and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these.

Both the works and revelation of God, which give light, instruction and comfort to his people, are dark to the wicked. They are a savor of life unto life to the one, and a savor of death unto death to the other. 2 Cor. ii.; 15, 16. Dan. xii. 10. Rom. viii. 28.

It is written, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Isa. liii. 2-12.

26. And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians.

The Lord intended that Moses should stretch out his rod although he only mentioned his hand, for the explanation had been given so often that it was not needful to repeat it here. Exod. vii. 19; viii. 5, 16; ix. 22, 23. Very often, more is meant than is said, as the sacraments of the eucharist and baptism came in the place of the passover and circumcision.

We may also learn the important place that human instrumentality holds in the divine administration. If the Lord intended that the waters of the sea return to their wonted level and overwhelm the Egyptians, he could as easily have done so without Moses' ministry as he could with it. But this would not have honored his servant Moses, nor would it so forcibly have impressed the Hebrews with their intimate participation in the memorable affairs of their nation. When the waters returned at Moses' word, and at the stretching out of his rod, it showed the connection of God with the events, and showed that Moses was his servant and his prophet. So God bears testimony to his servants. 1 Sam. iii. 19. 1 Kings xvii. 1.

Agreeably to this, Paul was sent to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 17, 18; although he had no more power over these things than Moses had over the waters of the Red Sea. If Paul plant and Apollos water, it is God that giveth the increase. Hence we

see the great grace of the reward to those who turn many to righteousness, for God only turns them, and then graciously rewards the instruments for what he himself does with them. Dan. xii. 3.

The wisdom and goodness of this economy appears in its result: "And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses." Verse 31.

We know that the use of means belongs to the divine economy, and should be diligent in employing them in the exercise of faith.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 3. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.

Words are sometimes used out of their common meaning, but as the subject, context and other words show their meaning, there is no need of our being at any loss respecting them. Matt. xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. x. 17, 23, 33. Gal. i. 10. John x. 34, 35, 36.

24. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

The people forgot to revere either God or Moses here, for they were fickle and unbelieving; they did not exhibit piety in this part of their journey. This want of water was specially intended to teach them to look unto God in every situation. And it was intended to prove to them his fatherly love and care over them in their afflictions, and thus encourage them to exercise faith in him.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 4. Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

The manna is called bread because it was a substitute for it. The Lord Jesus was called bread because he was like bread,

in that he sustains and nourishes our souls unto eternal life, as bread nourishes and sustains our bodies. He said, therefore, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." John vi. 51.

So baptism of the Spirit is denominated baptizing with fire. Acts i. 5; ii. 3, 17.

Some are slow to understand why God should need to prove Israel or other men, inasmuch as he must know all things, without proving them.

But this is to ignore a very important part of the divine administration, which is that men act out their character, that he may deal with them accordingly, and thus have the cause or reason exhibited before the universe that his ways may be justified, and that heaven and earth may see and know that he judges both angels and men according to their works. Was there no need of Pharaoh exhibiting his heart? or of Abraham exhibiting his faith and obedience in offering up his son? Gen. xxii. 16, 17. Was no good accomplished by it when God said, "Now I know that thou fearest God?" Was there no good accomplished by God's proving him, when he promised, with an oath, that he would bless him for thus proving his fidelity?

Was there no wisdom in Jesus asking his disciples, "How many loaves have ye?" because he knew what he would do. John vi. 5, 6. See also Gen. ii. 19; iii. 2; xviii. 20, 21. Deut. viii. 2; xiii. 3; xxxii. 31. Ps. xiv. 2; xvii. 3.

All the innumerable transactions of men from the creation to the final judgment are only a revelation of men's hearts preparatory to the final judgment, and the manifestation of the divine glory.

All the works of men are demonstrations which will be exhibited to the universe in attestation of the righteousness of the judgment. Every trial of men and angels is for this purpose, and for this demonstration, as was the trial in Eden.

Saints have their trials that God may be glorified in them. And Moses said unto the people, "Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not." Exod. xx. 20. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Rev. iii. 10.

Although he knows all things intuitively, by his omniscience, yet he will also know them historically; for he has use for them historically; although he knows them secretly, he will have them demonstrated publicly.

This is shown by questions, as if God wanted to know: "Adam, where art thou?" Gen. iii. 9. "Where is Abel thy brother?" Gen. iv. 9. "Who do men say that I am?" Matt.

xvi. 13. "Whose is this image and superscription?" Matt. xxii. 20. He does not ask because he wants to know, but because he has use for the answer.

13. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

This was the first supply of quails which came on the night that the manna was first received. But the quails fell, and were gathered early in the evening, before the manna fell which was toward the morning.

The second miraculous supply of quails was a year later; when they had become weary of the manna. Num. xi. 6, 31.

27. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

Israel had been long exposed to the evil examples of heathenism, and exhibited its fruits in going out to collect food on the holy day. But finding there was none, they might have been humbled for their error.

28. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

There is very little said about the particular things which are a desecration of the holy day. A few particulars with the general law to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, seem to have been sufficient.

But if it be true that a word to the wise is sufficient, it is also true, that to the unwise and obstinate, nothing is sufficient. This sin of going out to gather food on the holy day afforded an occasion for an express condemnation of it, and for an express injunction to abide in their houses; not going into the fields for any thing. They had no synagogues to visit, nor any need to seek food; for they had enough given on the preceding day for two days. If they neglected to gather it was their own fault. And they might not supply a deficiency arising from their negligence, by profaning the holy day.

Afterward in Canaan it was made their duty to assemble for worship on the Sabbath. And it was proper to leave their houses for that purpose when the distance was limited.

They need not leave their houses in hunger; but if they became hungry they might pluck heads of wheat or barley, and eat, if near at hand. But to go out for any such purpose would be an open violation of the day. A man might not leave his house for any worldly business, or recreation.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSES 1, 2. Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.

The words, statutes, laws, commandments and judgments are used commonly in the same meaning, as in Ps. cxix., in almost every verse.

The first pronoun *thou* relates to Moses requiring him to set before the people; but the other about buying a servant is addressed to every Hebrew, and to every inhabitant.

If the divine law allowed the sale and purchase of a Hebrew servant, and holding and using him as such, then it was not sinful to buy, to sell or to hold them. He would be bold, who should teach that God taught sin in his statutes, authorized it in the divine law even six years. What would we say of a legislature which should enact a law, that any man might practice murder, adultery, robbery, forgery, or theft for six years?

We can not teach that slavery or monarchy is sinful without blaspheming God; for God countenanced and justified them both.

The Hebrew ritual did not require obedience from strangers, except as to the moral part of it, as the Sabbath, justice, and honesty. See Chap. xx. 10.

3. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself.

These provisions seem to have been necessary to settle all the questions that might arise about the slavery of Hebrews. If a Hebrew were poor, he might sell himself, his son or his daughter; and at the end of six years they would each go out free except the daughter, who would be better situated in a permanent home, than to be strolling about as she would, probably, if her father were too poor to provide for her. Verse 7. But if this Hebrew servant were unmarried when he was sold, and his master had given him a wife who had borne him children, he alone should have freedom at the end of six years: the wife and children should remain in bondage, although it should separate the ties of husband, wife, parent and child.

The relation of master and servant was more sacred than the relation of husband, wife, or than that of parent and child. This

every man knows, who knows the Bible to be the word of God. Hagar was a bondwoman before she became Abraham's wife. But her becoming his wife made no alteration in her bondage, which is shown by the angel's remanding her back to her bondage; which was inviolate until she was given her freedom by Abraham. Gen. xvi. 9; xxi. 9-14.

5. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free.

In this case he was to become a perpetual servant for life.

Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are, then, not inalienable. The same truth is attested in our civil code, by capital punishment and by the penitentiary. There is not a man among us that believes them inalienable. Truths so plainly revealed can not be ignored. Infidels may hate them, and reject them; but they can not be ignorant of them.

16. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.

He that should steal a human being should die for his crime. But it did not apply to buying men, or to captives taken in war; which were both justified throughout the divine code. Num. xxxi. 26-40. Lev. xxv. 39-47.

20. And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.

The divine law protected servants from injustice and cruelty.

21. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

He is his chattel, his property, his money. And his loss of his servant amounts to a fine equal to his value. Let every man fear God, and reverence him by receiving, believing and loving his word, which every good man will do.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 12. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof.

The translators made a mistake if they thought that this

passage does not come under the rule of the converse *vau*; for the negative should have been carried over into this member, and should have been rendered, "Neither if it be stolen from him, shall he make restitution"; *i. e.*, if it be stolen from him, he shall not make restitution to the owner thereof.

Three cases are cited in these verses, 10, 12 and 13, of the loss of property by the bailee, all precisely alike in principle. The translators should have decided them alike, and said that the bailee was not responsible. But without any good reason they have here negligently omitted to apply the converse quality of the Hebrew *vau*.

This is the more mortifying to the friends of divine revelation, because eminent jurists have resorted to the divine code for assistance in their adjudications, and have availed themselves of its light. But when they came to our translation of this passage they have felt obliged to turn away from it as replete with absurdity and contradiction; so that they could not accord with it. The translators have availed themselves of this converse quality of the Hebrew *vau*, and rendered succeeding members of sentences in the negative in the following places. 2 Kings xii. 8. Deut. xxxiii. 6; vii. 25; x. 9. Lev. xi. 12, 26. 1 Sam. ii. 2; xxii. 15. 2 Sam. xv. 27. 1 Chron. xxii. 18. 2 Chron. ix. 20; xxxiv. 2. Job iii. 11; vii. 1; xx. 4; xxiii. 17; xxviii. 17; xxx. 20, 25; xxxi. 20; xxxvi. 32. Ps. ix. 18; xxvi. 9; xxxv. 19; l. 9; lxxv. 5; lxxviii. 42; xci. 5, 6; xciv. 10. And surely they ought not to have forgotten it in Exod. xxii. 12; or 1 Kings ii. 9.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 7. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

In two respects he does not justify the wicked, and in one respect he does justify the wicked. In this respect he does not justify the wicked, he does not approve of them. He does not save them that continue in it, and do not turn from it by repentance, faith, holiness. And yet it is true that he justifies the ungodly, and them only. Matt. ix. 13. Rom. iv. 5; but they turn and repent.

8. And thou shalt take no gift, for a gift blindeth the wise.

[When we shall have learned to refer the language of an in-

spired writer to his subject, we shall have made no little progress in biblical exegesis. The subject of the lawgiver is judicial business; and a gift to a legislator, a judge or a juror is intended to blind and pervert him. And it has these effects.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 10. And they saw the God of Israel.

As the infinite Jehovah is a spirit, and therefore invisible to mortal eyes, we are to understand that God assumed some appearance, which they saw, as the appearance of a cloud and a pillar of fire over the tabernacle of Israel, and the cloud and fire at Mount Sinai. Exod. xxiv. 17; xix. 9, 18; xxxiii. 18-23. Deut. iv. 12.

This, though difficult, is capable of reconciliation with John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time. As inspired men do not digress, we may understand John Baptist as addressing his hearers all his generation; and affirming that not one of them, at any time, had seen God.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 40. And look that thou make them after their pattern.

Moses is addressed as if he had to make all those implements with his own hands; whereas he was only to manage and direct the labor of others. The pronoun *thou* is used as if he were the only workman: the representative is addressed as if he were the representees. This is agreeable to the maxim in civil law, *Qui facit per aliter, facit per se*. Who acts by another acts by himself; or he acts himself who acts by another.

Bezaleel and Aholiab were to do the work.

The Scriptures require exposition. Nehemiah viii. 8. The style in the Hebrew and the Greek differs from ours; the lapse of time has occasioned other variations. Expositors have a great work to do, and a great trial in doing it: whether they will search for truth, and for truth only? And whether they will give truth, and truth only; or whether they will please

themselves and others, and wrest the truth? Gal. i. 10. Gen. ii. 17. Commentators may not speculate nor imagine.

It may be difficult to decide which is the greater enemy, the heretic or the infidel? For party spirit perverts the heart as does the gift. Chap. xxiii. 8. When the word teaches what a man does not like, he will disbelieve it, and to cover his unbelief, pervert and wrest the meaning of the words of revelation, which is the spirit and essence of infidelity. This is illustrated by the treatment of the subjects of Baptism, Slavery, Calvinism, etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VERSE 3. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another.

The words here rendered *one to another*, are not literal, but are the symbolical language of the Hebrew, and are literally, the woman to her sister. As such symbols are not unusual in the Scriptures, we perceive that Lev. xviii. 18, may be a similar example of the use of sister to signify a similarity of relation, without any intimation of consanguinity.

CHAPTER XXIX.

VERSE 1. And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office.

The work of hallowing, consecrating, or making holy, was extensively provided for in the worship of the sanctuary. The seventh day of the week was from the beginning set apart by thus consecrating it—making it holy.

As ungodly men do not understand this subject of sanctifying a day or a ministerial office, making it holy, we need not wonder that they are so often found polluting them; since we read, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." 1 Cor. ii. 14. The sacred office of high priest was made hereditary in the family of Aaron. And it was ordained that any other person coming near to offer to officiate in it, was to be put to death. Num. i. 51.

The common people of Israel had so little acquaintance with the holiness of the sanctuary, that they were often found violating it, and perishing in their temerity. Lev. x. 1, 2. Num. xvi. 1, 2, 32, 35. 1 Sam. vi. 7.

4. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.

Such was the dignity, and such the importance of the office of high priest, who was the type of the Messiah, that solemn ordinances in consecrating the incumbent were deemed worthy of enactment and observance.

Moses was therefore directed, among other things, to bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle, and to wash them with water; without which they could not officiate as high priests. Chap. xxix. 21. Matt. iii. 13.

CHAPTER XXX.

VERSE 15. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.

The true and real atonement for the souls of lost men is the propitiation made by the Lord Jesus Christ; for nothing else can remove the guilt of sin. But notwithstanding this truth, there were also typical atonements, as indispensable observances, as the sacrifices and burnt offerings of Israel, the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon the door-posts, and poll-tax of atonement money; neither of which might be neglected under any pretense; for they were ceremonial observances alluding to the atonement of Christ.

As all men had immortal souls, and were all equally concerned in their salvation, it was proper that they contribute alike in these funds which were to sustain the institutions of religion. If they did not contribute, they were to be deprived of the good annexed to the solemn ordinances of worship, as any of the Hebrews would have been deprived of exemption, had they omitted in Egypt the observance of the passover, which had the effect of atonement so far as to procure the deliverance of their first-born from the destroying angel.

The neglect of the ceremonial law would clearly indicate the want of faith, and would constitute the guilt of unbelief.

29. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

Shall be holy as a prerequisite, not as a consequence. To sanctify was to avoid everything that would defile them. Haggai ii. 12, 13.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VERSE 33. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

The interpretation of the divine word is unavoidable. If we were to take the word as some fanatics contend that we must in its literal sense, we shall reject the truth that is taught us, and disparage the Scriptures, and disrespect the divine author.

We must study the subject, examine the context, and compare parallel passages, and ascertain the true meaning of a passage; for there is a sense in which the words are true. That sense is to be ascertained, and in it the words are to be received.

How obvious is the truth and the necessity of this rule. "He that believeth on me," as the Scriptures hath said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John vii. 38. "I am the bread that came down from heaven." "This is my body." "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again." John ii. 19; viii. 5, 58; ix. 3.

There is a sense in which all the human family are written in God's book. All living men are written in his book of living men. To blot any of them out of this book is to take away their life.

There is another book containing the names of the elect, from which none can be blotted out without destroying the divine perfection of immutability. God has many books, Rev. xx. 12; for there is another book in which the actions of believers are written, and another in which the actions of unbelievers are recorded.

The book which Moses asked his name blotted from, if Israel were to perish in the wilderness, was the book of living men. He would rather die than live if that beloved people were to perish then, and all the promises of God should fail, and all the hopes of his people end in disappointment.

He felt like Judah, when he said to Joseph, "How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?" Gen. xlv. 36. He felt like Esther when she said, "How can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or, how can I endure

to see the destruction of my kindred?" Esther viii. 6. We need not suspect Moses of making this request in fretfulness or impatience, for charity thinketh not evil. There is ample room to hope better things of him.

This passage, with many others, must be construed with liberality; because if every one that has sinned were to be blotted out of the book of the living, then all the human family must be slain, for all have sinned. Rom. iii. 23. Those who sinned to a certain degree were so blotted out. Num. xiv. 36, 37, 38. Men will not be cut off from life because they may prefer it, but only when their sin demands it, or when they have filled their days.

It is a confirmation of this interpretation, that the Psalmist calls the list of living persons, the book of the living. "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living." Ps. lix. 28. From the book of the living names are being blotted out, and new ones inserted continually. But from the book of men's actions, words and thoughts, nothing is blotted out or erased, except those that are repented of. Isa. xlv. 22.

But the book of life is maintained in its integrity; nothing has either been added to it or taken from it, since the foundation of the world, neither will there be to the end of it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VERSE 4. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.

In seasons of fasting a man's behavior should correspond with his humiliation. Hence the Israelites wore sackcloth in mourning. And hence they used fasting in which nothing was put into their mouths during the whole day, nor the labor of others exacted; neither was any recreation, pleasantries nor amusement enjoyed, because of their incongruity. To chasten the soul, and to cheer it with any recreation, would manifestly be an incongruity, a contradiction, an absurdity. Dan. vi. 18. Jonah iii. 5-9. Esther iv. 16. Exod. xxxiii. 6.

LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSES 1, 2. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done.

If love be a fulfillment of the law, Rom. xiii. 10, then the infraction of the law is malevolence. And if he that keepeth the commandments is he that loves God, John xiv. 21, then the sin of ignorance in morality, is as clear a demonstration of what is in the heart as is the sin of knowledge; for if the Jews had known the Lord they would not have crucified him, and their conduct would not so clearly have shown the heart, as the sin of ignorance did. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

It requires faith, humility and deference to receive cordially this doctrine, although it be so clearly revealed. And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden, though he wished it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. Lev. v. 2, 13, 17.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 23. And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear.

It was necessary for the Lord to be without any infraction of the law, or he could not be a propitiatory sacrifice; anything offered in sacrifice was to be without spot or blemish to be accepted.

If this application of blood was not made to Christ, it was done on the cross when he was sprinkled with his own blood.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 18. And the remnant of the oil * * * and the priest shall make an atonement for him.

Why should an atonement be necessary for one who had only had the leprosy, unless there is involuntary sin as taught in imputation, *Exod. xx. 5*; as taught in the sin of ignorance. *Chap. v. 2, 13. Luke xiii. 24. John vi. 65. Rom. vii. 18. Gal. v. 17. Chap. v. 17.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 6. None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord.

It is written, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." So general is the corruption of society respecting incest, that men care little about it; the conscience of many has waxed dull. Although it is not so said, yet the context shows that this is the general prohibition of sexual intercourse between those who are near of kin.

It is very significant and decisive, that this denomination—near of kin—is, by the lawgiver, applied to relation by affinity and to relation by consanguinity: there is no difference made. A man may no more approach to any of his deceased wife's relations, than he may of his own. Our confession of faith gives the true doctrine. And Presbyterians have all received it, and have solemnly promised before God to observe it; there will be one witness for the truth as long as she holds fast her integrity. If she becomes corrupted the cause of truth will lose one witness.

Let it not be forgotten that this programme puts the relation by consanguinity and relation by affinity upon the same ground precisely.

This is proved by the mingling of specifications under the same head, under the same law, the same prohibition, with respect to the infamous crime of incest. Is a man forbidden to approach a mother, verse 7; or a sister, verse 13; the reason is, nearness of kin, verse 6. And is he forbidden to approach to an uncle's wife indefinitely, whether a widow or not? verse 14; or to a widowed daughter-in-law, verse 15; the reason is the

same, nearness of kin. The use of the word wife for widow, does not alter the case; as the reason of the prohibition was nearness of kin, it made no difference as far as incest was involved, whether the woman were a wife or a widow, or whether the man were married or single, for nearness of kin would equally pertain in either case.

There is, therefore, no such carelessness and indecisiveness in the style of the Scriptures as some seem to imagine.

As incest is the subject, irrelevant matter is not introduced, nor suffered to divert attention from the real point in view. This was wise, for it gives clearness, strength of application to its precepts. Adultery is not here named nor alluded to by making the parties single or not single, because it was not called for here. That vice was elsewhere provided against in its appropriate place.

The apostle, in his epistle, illustrates this subject by referring to an egregious case of incest, in one who had his father's wife, no mention being made whether either was in the married state or not, for incest was the subject. So when John the Baptist reprov'd Herod for having his brother Philip's wife, no mention is made of the fact of Philip's being still living, which would have been necessary to establish the crime of adultery, but was irrelevant to the charge of incest.

It can not be inferred that the father's wife above mentioned had a husband living, because she is called wife instead of widow, for the Scriptures use wife for widow in all cases in which the deceased husband is alluded to. Gen. xxxviii. 8, 9. Deut. xxv. 5, 9. Judges xx. 4. Ruth iv. 5. 1 Sam. iv. 19; xxvii. 3; xxx. 5. 2 Sam. xi. 26; xii. 8, 9, 10, 15. Matt. xxii. 24, 25. Luke xx. 28. Acts v. 7. Judges xx. 4, proves the point more strongly by the application of the rule to the other sex.

That it is not adultery that is the subject, is clear from the prohibition of approach to a sister, a niece, or a wife's daughter, or granddaughter, verses 9, 10, 17. As many of these would naturally be unmarried, and yet all approach to them in marriage or otherwise is prohibited on account of nearness of kin, we perceive that, when a brother's wife is prohibited, it is also on account of nearness of kindred. If in some of these prohibitions there may have been other grounds of prohibition, such other grounds are not alluded to in this statute. They are elsewhere provided for; this statute relates to incest only.

Why was all approach either in marriage or otherwise, forbidden concerning a brother's wife? The statute answers: Because of nearness of kin.

If any one thinks that he may inquire, why? the answer is:

Marriage of that woman with Philip's brother, made them one flesh, and that woman is his sister. Matt. xix. 5, 6. Gen. xxxviii. 24, 25, 26.

Some have tried to escape from accountability for incest, by arguing that the death of one of the parties to the marriage relation, dissolves all that the relation created. But this is contrary to revelation, which uniformly shows that some of the relations remain after the death of one party. Gen. xxxviii. 24-26. Deut. xxv. 5, 7. Ruth i. 5, 6, 8, 9, 15; ii. 11, 19, 20.

Ruth, whose husband was dead, claimed Boaz as a near kinsman, who was a kinsman of her deceased husband, and who therefore was to perform a kinsman's duty. And he acknowledged both the existing relation and the existing obligation, saying, "It is true that I am thy near kinsman." Ruth iii. 9, 12.

If any interpret Rom. vii. 2, to make it teach differently, they wrest it, and make more out of it than it contains, for it teaches no more than that the death of one party so far absolves the other, that she is not guilty of adultery in a second marriage.

Again there was a relation created by Absalom's going to the ten women who kept David's palace when he was gone from it; for marriage is not necessary to constitute this union. 1 Cor. vi. 16. So also Absalom's death did not dissolve it, and the inspired penman has faithfully recorded and preserved the enlightening fact that David shunned the incest on account of Absalom's continued relation to them. 2 Sam. xvi. 22; xx. 3. We are not left to any doubt or uncertainty on this subject.

Why was a man prohibited from any approach to a wife's mother, daughter or granddaughter? It could not be because he was in wedlock; for that would be no reason against taking them; that would not equally be against his taking any other woman if incest were not the crime in view.

Therefore we know that incest obtained by affinity as well as by consanguinity. And we know, too, that the unity created by marriage or intercourse, was not dissolved on the death of one of the parties. If it were then as Absalom was dead David need not to have abstained from the ten women, and there would have been no claim on a Jew to take his brother's wife, to perpetuate his brother's family; nor would a widow now have any right of dower.

16. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.

As the reason for the prohibition is nearness of kin, verse 6, there was no need of specifying all the similar degrees of relationship that fall under it. If brother's wife is named, then

wife's sister, and sister's husband need not be named; for they are of the same degree of relation.

If it be inquired why a brother's wife is prohibited since it was made a duty to marry her? The answer is, that it was not made his duty to marry her unless the brother had died childless. If that brother had not died childless, to thus marry her would be incest, and should not this crime have been provided against? In our wretched, imperfect and fallen world, duties and laws impinge upon each other. We are forbidden to kill, and also forbidden to let live, or not to kill. *Exod. xx. 13; xxi. 29. Lev. xxiv. 21.*

Many rules have exceptions. Thou shalt not kill is the rule. But he that violates the rule, and kills his neighbor, is the exception, and must be killed. So a man may not marry any of his wife's relations is the rule, yet if a brother died childless under Jewish economy, if his wife were young (not otherwise) his brother was to marry her although he had a family of his own, in order that his brother's family might have heirs to his property. But this was only temporary, and was to cease with the Jewish dispensation.

17. Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, for they are her near kinswomen.

Consider that this law is put upon the ground of nearness of kin. Can man put it upon any other? And if a wife's son's daughter is too near of kin, is not a wife's sister still nearer?

Is there any obscurity here? Any ground for indecision? If none, then we know that there are men who can disbelieve where there is satisfactory ground for faith; and that there are those who can believe where there is no ground for belief.

The provision that some member of the family should take the widow of a deceased brother if she were young, did not affect the necessity for a general law against a man's taking her, except in the specified case: and for two reasons, viz: the provision of the Levirate law was temporary, and the law against incest was moral and perpetual. And in prohibiting this, all of the same degree are prohibited.

18. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her lifetime.

If this passage might have been more explicit, it is perhaps sufficiently clear. It is perfectly evident that sister is often

used in the Scriptures to express the idea of similarity of relation. This rule applied to this passage makes it equivalent to a prohibition of taking a companion wife to the one you have. The clause, *besides the other*, binds us to this construction; for taking any woman as a sister wife, would be one besides the other. Besides any woman besides the other, besides the one you have, would be to grieve and to vex her. These two considerations seem to be sufficient to show that sister is used here in a metaphorical sense.

All the illustrations above upon the law concerning incest, establish the same point.

If sister be taken here in a literal sense, then the law against incest is nullified. If God does not thus nullify his own law, then sister here is to be interpreted metaphorically.

That interpreting sister in a metaphorical sense in this place is justifiable, is further evident from the following passages in which without any hesitation we do thus interpret it. The prophet calls Jerusalem the sister of Sodom and of Samaria. Ezek. xvi. 45, 46.

Also Israel for similar backsliding is called the sister of Judah. Jer. iii. 8, 10. How obvious the propriety of calling those in the Lord Jesus Christ, brothers and sisters. Matt. xii. 50.

From an impending connection, Job calls the worm his sister, xvii. 14. He calls himself a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls, xxx. 29. We are directed to call wisdom our sister, and our kinswoman. Prov. vii. 4. Moses calls companion curtains in the tabernacle, the woman and her sister. Exod. xxvi. 3; xxxvi. 10, 13—woman to her sister in Hebrew. If this is so common in the Scriptures we are warranted in so interpreting it in this place.

This passage then is a prohibition of bigamy, and equally prohibits a wife's relative, and every other woman.

It is also a law of degrees, and is not to be confined to its specifications; for it only prohibits men from taking certain women; and does not say whom women may not marry.

The sixteenth verse seems to have concluded the law upon the subject of incest, under verse 6, and in this verse enters upon other subjects.

To interpret this word sister in a literal sense is to make it teach by implication that a man may take any other woman as a companion wife. Such an interpretation puts it in contradiction to Mal. ii. 14, 15, and opens a wide door to licentiousness; for if it forbids marriage with a wife's sister, and only while the other is living, it justifies two licentious inferences;

one is that he may marry any other woman while the one is living; and the other is that he may marry a wife's sister after the other is dead. Then why did Malachi condemn bigamy from the law of nature, or one wife only being created for Adam? And then why did Moses forbid marriage with a first wife's mother or daughter or granddaughter on the ground of nearness of kin?

The law against incest and bigamy belongs to the moral code, and the Levirate law was only a temporary provision to continue only while the Hebrews occupied their entailed estates; and ceased when they ceased to occupy those estates. But the moral law from its nature is abiding and unchangeable. The Levirate law was therefore only the exception to the rule which, on moral principles, inhibited the intercourse between relatives either by affinity or consanguinity on the ground of nearness of kin, or unity of flesh contracted by alliances. Lev. xviii. 6, 17. Matt. xix. 5, 6.

This interpretation makes this passage harmonize with the whole divine code. As God made only one wife for Adam, he thereby declared that a man should only have one. If a man and his wife become one flesh, then the doctrine in our confession of faith is established. Also the gospel against divorce recognized, Rom. vii. 2, 3, teaching that the married pair are united and bound for life. And if they separate they must remain alone, or be reconciled. 1 Cor. 10-14.

In the Old Testament it is taught that God hateth putting away. Mal. ii. 16.

This corresponds with New Testament. Matt. xix. 9.

But the interpretation which is here opposed puts the word of God in collision; for if a man by that interpretation might have two wives at once if they were not sisters, why should a woman be called an adulteress because she had two husbands?

The interpretation, therefore, which preserves the harmony of the divine law, is the true one.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 12. If the priest's daughter also be married unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.

In the preceding verse we are taught that bondmen and bondmaids, persons born in servitude, or bought with money

were allowed this privilege. In this respect the priest's slaves had a privilege in the church above his own daughter who was allied to a stranger. What a beautiful unity is maintained in the divine word, which often meets us so unexpectedly.

If the reason is not given here it was unnecessary, as it is given elsewhere. Not only had she become a stranger by being allied to one in marriage who was a Gentile and become one flesh with him, Gen. ii. 23, Matt. xix. 5, but there was another great difference between a wife and a bondwoman; she was under the control of a heathen family, while Abraham's bondmen were under regulations of a pious family; "I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the ways of the Lord." But if the priest's daughter were returned to her father's house as in her youth, her privileges were restored, verse 13.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 3. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

The weekly Sabbath is called one of the Lord's feasts, one of the solemn seasons of devotion which he appointed to be observed by his chosen people. It is by his authority appointed a Sabbath of rest, a holy convocation, or calling together; in it all work is forbidden.

When the saints assemble for the purpose of united devotion, it is called a holy assembly, because the object for which they assemble, is holy occupation—worship and adoration of the infinite and holy Jehovah; and therefore no other business is to be mixed with it to pollute it, none may be transacted or thought of, nothing but worship, as prayer, praise, and sacraments. As God rested from creation when he set apart the holy day, so we are to rest—to abstain from every kind of work or business; even from our own worldly or secular words and thoughts. Every kind of worldly business must be laid aside on the holy day, that we too may consecrate it to holy employment exclusively.

Digging graves and burying the dead are works of business, and not worship or devotion. They are work, and are therefore forbidden.

Every kind of business transacted by an ecclesiastical judicatory is business—is work, and is forbidden. Constituting a judicatory is business—is work; so is keeping the minutes; consequently no judicatory, from the session to the assembly, can meet on the Lord's sacred day; for the day is holy. No meeting of such judicatory may be announced or proposed or named on the holy day. No physicians or neighbors may visit the sick on this day, unless their situation demands it. No man may violate the sanctity of any family by a call or a visit on the holy day; every family should be left undisturbed, to devote the day to holiness and to God. No pecuniary matters may be attended to in the church nor out of it, nor even spoken of; for it is worldly business. The tract or missionary society, nor any other may be named on the holy day; for they are human devices, and not ordinances of God.

That we may not attend to any funeral rites on the Sabbath, is shown by inspired testimony. The disciples returned from the sepulcher of the Lord before the Sabbath, and when they had collected materials for embalming his body, as it was so late that they could not attend to it that day, they had to omit it until the Sabbath was past. And the evangelist adds, "They rested over the Sabbath according to the commandment." Luke xxiii. 56.

If their resting, refraining in this instance, was according to the commandment, those obsequies would have been unlawful on the holy day. And then we must conclude, that they knew that the sanctification of the day, making holy, meant something. Lev. xix. 30 Ps. xlii. 4. Isa. lviii. 13.

To go into the election of a pastor, or attend to any preliminary measure, as publishing notice of it, or speaking of it, or even thinking it, is a violation of the holy day.

The reason is, that although it relates to religion, as building churches, printing, binding and selling Bibles, yet it is only the secular business of religion and is therefore work—secular work—and only that. It is not worship, it is not holy employment.

The election and installation of pastors are not commanded of God, but are man's ordinances, man's business. And even if they were commanded, they are mere secular arrangements, to save inconvenience of continually providing supplies for the pulpit, and of ministers being without a home. Men are commanded to labor six days, and do all their work, and are forbidden to do it on the Lord's day.

It is to be feared that there are many who never inquired the meaning of the Lord's day, or the sanctification of it. Plowing and seeding are also commanded, but being so does not sanctify them, nor make them holy. Business may have

a relation to the church and to religion, as building churches, printing Bibles, paying ministers' salaries, yet, they are work, our work, and would desecrate the Lord's day.

The Jewish Sabbath, as did all their days, commenced at sunset, and so continued through all that dispensation. But under the gospel dispensation, neither our Sabbaths, nor other days do so commence. The great work of atonement which was finished in the morning of the resurrection, governs the Christian Sabbath so far as to control the hour of its commencement, that it commence not any more on the evening, as did the Jewish Sabbath.

The Sabbath day now commemorates both the work of creation and the work of propitiation. Gen. ii. 3. Lev. xix. 30. Rev. i. 10. Heb. iv. 9. Lev. xxiii. 32. John xx. 19.

The collection of money for the sexton, or for any other purpose, being worldly and pecuniary business, may not be either attended to, or named on the Lord's day. A Christian at home may lay by any donation to the Lord, depositing it in a drawer of his desk, or in some place by itself. But he may not take it to the house of God to pay it to the officers of the church, and divert them with keeping accounts and money changing. If there were in the church a place of deposit, so that he might deposit it there without interrupting any one's attention, perhaps it would be unobjectionable to so deposit it.

5. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover.

The first month of the Jewish ecclesiastical year was Abib, also called Nisan. It commenced on some day on which the moon changed, between the eighth day of March and the fifth of April.

As their year was a lunar year consisting of twelve lunations, 354 days, it fell short of a solar year by more than eleven days; consequently each succeeding year would commence eleven days earlier than the preceding, except when rectified.

To keep the calendar within due limits, an intercalary lunation or month was added, as often as necessary, to make the passover occur with the first full moon after the vernal equinox.

7. In the first day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

This was not the weekly Sabbath, but a holy convocation. The passover was celebrated by the observance of two convocations of the people, also called Sabbaths; one on the first day, and the other on the seventh, on which no servile work might be done, such as the ordinary work of the farmer or the

mechanic, but employments or things less servile might be attended to; while the holy Sabbath was so sacred that no work might be done. *Exod. xx. 8, 9.*

This distinction is made between the weekly Sabbath and all the other Sabbaths connected with the annual feasts, except the feast of atonement on the first day of the tenth month, which seems to have been so sacred as to require the inhibition of all work, verses 28, 29, 30, 31.

9, 10. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest.

This feast of the first-fruits was not observed as early as the passover by forty years. For as this feast related to their harvest, it could not be observed when journeying in the wilderness where they had no harvests. Therefore, the command to observe it was not to take effect until they should arrive at Canaan. So entirely is this feast diverse and distinct from the passover.

And although this fact is so obvious, yet the whole world seems to have agreed to unite them into one, so as to compute the feast of Pentecost from the passover, instead of computing it from the feast of harvest.

At this feast of harvest every man was to bring the first sheaf that he reaped, if he had any harvest to reap. This sheaf was to be of barley, which was about two weeks earlier than their wheat harvest. They were neither to eat rubbed grain from the green heads, and dried by the fire, nor parched grain, nor bread made of the grain in any way, until they acknowledged the providence of God in giving them a harvest.

11. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

When every man had brought his sheaf and presented it to the priest, he was to retain it until the next day after the succeeding weekly Sabbath, or until the first day of the coming week. On the day the sheaf was waved, a lamb was to be offered for a burnt offering, but the sheaf was only to be waved and not burnt. *Lev. ii. 12.*

16. Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord.

From the above-mentioned waving of the sheaf seven Sab-

baths occurring would make seven weeks or forty-nine days. And the next day following would make fifty days, which fiftieth day was the Pentecost, which is the Greek word for fifty. But the whole feast is called the feast of weeks. The feast of Pentecost is the fiftieth or last day.

This feast of Pentecost was computed, not from the passover, but from the feast of weeks, or the first fruits of harvest, which was distinct from the passover as was the feast of atonement. Of this fact there can not possibly be any doubt; and yet strange as it must seem, all the world have agreed to compute it from the passover. Even Josephus, Cruden, the Bible dictionaries, Buck, every commentator, and even the Jewish almanac at this day, all fall into the same error.

This method of computing the Pentecost from the next day after the Jewish Sabbath will always bring it to the first day of the week, which is our Sabbath, the Lord's day. It can not so result from computing it from the passover which might occur on any day of the week; for the passover followed the changes of the moon, being the first Jewish Sabbath after the first full moon in the year.

If the occurrence of the Pentecost on the fiftieth day after the resurrection seems not to agree with this comment, it should be remembered, that the confusion of feasts, here mentioned, had occurred before that time; hence the Pentecost was then made to occur fifty days from the passover, instead of fifty days after the waving of the sheaf. But as it was fifty days after the resurrection, and was the day which the Jews observed as the Pentecost, and as there was a great assemblage at Jerusalem, the Lord improved the occasion to pour out his Spirit and build his kingdom. This he could do whether the Jews had confused the Jewish feasts or not; for those feasts had all ceased to be of any obligation after his passion, being nailed to his cross and abolished. Col. ii. 14.

Whitsuntide is our Pentecost, and is too early in the calendar when placed fifty days after the passover; for it ought to occur later; so as to be fifty days after the commencement of the feast of weeks. As harvest in Palestine did not commence until the tenth of May, the feast of Whitsuntide would fall about the twenty-eighth of June, varying from it as the commencement of harvest varied from the tenth of May. But as the observance of Pentecost now is a superstition and not of divine authority, it is immaterial when it is kept; it is wrong to keep it at all.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 17. And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.

In numerous places of the Scriptures we are not to be governed by the words so much as by the obvious intention of the Spirit. As the intention here is to annex infallibly the punishment to the crime of homicide, when done without cause, it is to be understood with this limitation, as is the parallel passage, Gen. ix. 6.

This rule must be applied to many passages; for otherwise we shall do dishonor to the divine word by making its various parts inconsistent with each other. If a thief were killed in making depredations in the night, it is expressly provided that no blood be shed for him. Exod. xxii. 2. Besides it is made a duty to slay the murderer, the adulterer, the Sabbath-breaker, the enticer to idolatry, and the wizard. Num. xxxv. 31. Deut. xiii. 10; xxii. 24. Num. xv. 35. Lev. xx. 2, 27. Exod. xxii. 18.

The sixth commandment also is given indefinitely, "Thou shalt not kill." Exod. xx. 13. Every one understands it with limitations and explanations given in other passages. The exceptions that life might be taken for murder, and beasts for food, are not expressed.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 35. And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.

Though he be a stranger, or a proselyte, yet is he thy brother. Thou shalt relieve him. The same application of this charity was to be made to every circumcised brother, whether he were a descendant of Israel, or a proselyte, that the brother might enjoy life with the people of Israel.

This relief should be extended to every brother, but especially to the Jewish brother. Verse 38. We are required to do good unto all men as we have opportunity; but especially unto the household of faith.

Although the Hebrews were told that one law should be

for them and for strangers, it was always limited to the statute to which it was annexed; for although proselytes were brethren, they were not to enjoy equal rights with the Hebrews except in some specified particulars; for circumcision did not endow the proselytes with all the rights and privileges of Hebrews; for none but the children of Levi could approach the priesthood. None but Israelites born could hold the scepter. Bondmen, though circumcised, remained in perpetual bondage to their circumcised brethren, or to uncircumcised strangers. Gen. xvii. 11, 12. Num. iii. 10. Deut. xvii. 15. Lev. xxv. 44, 45, 46, 47.

Women, though not circumcised, were Hebrews, and had not equal rights with men. Gen. iii. 16.

Children, though equally human beings, were not equal with adults, nor with one another. Gen. iv. 7.

The gospel maintains the same inequalities in our fallen nature. 1 Tim. ii. 11-14. 1 Cor. xiv. 34. Eph. v. 22, 23, 24. 1 Pet. iii. 5, 6.

As the New Testament teaches the same inequalities, we learn that these teachings belong to the moral law, and are the law of nature. Making slavery criminal is blasphemy and infidelity. 1 Tim. vi. 1.

54. And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of jubilee, both he, and his children with him.

This provision is made for those Hebrews who were sold to foreigners or strangers who were not Hebrews (see verse 47); for the Hebrew servants sold to Hebrews were to serve only six years. If a Gentile living with Israel bought Hebrew servants they were to let them be redeemed at any time, verse 48. But if the Hebrew servant sold to a Gentile was not redeemed before jubilee, he and his family were then free. No other servants were freed by the jubilee.

The jubilee freed all the land that had been sold by Hebrews; for the possessions of the Hebrews were entailed estates. It also canceled all debts which remained unpaid. It also freed all Hebrew servants that were sold to strangers and were not redeemed. But it did not affect the condition of any other servants; for Hebrew servants were required to serve six years. Exod. xxi. 2. The jubilee could not affect them without infracting this law. And the bondmen in Israel were of the families of strangers, and their bondage was perpetual. See Lev. xxv. 44, 45, 46. The jubilee could not affect their condition without violating this law of their perpetual servi-

tude. It freed the land, and contained provisions for Jews only.

The institution and the language used prove this exegesis to be the true one. See verse 10. "And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession; and ye shall return every man to his family." The application is restricted to the Hebrews, and to them only. A jubilee shall it be *to you*; and *ye* shall return every man to his family. It extended no privilege to the heathen in their country.

Even its extension to the Hebrews had four limitations. It did not liberate Hebrew daughters that were sold. Exod. xxi. 7. It did not liberate the Hebrew whose ear had been bored to the door-post. Exod. xxi. 5, 6. It did not redeem a house in the walled city that had been sold. Lev. xxv. 30. It did not release a Hebrew servant from his six years' servitude. Other provisions had been made for all these cases. And they were final, and could not be made void.

The jubilee was made for Israel and not for the heathen. They had no privilege by it. Bondmen were not released by it.

From the time that the Gibeonites were made bondmen by Joshua, to the time when King Saul persecuted them, and seven of Israel suffered death for that persecution, eight jubilees had occurred; and yet the condition of these Gibeonites as bondmen continued the same. Josh. ix. 22-27. 2 Sam. xxi. 19. Exod. xxi. 2, 7. Lev. xxv. 23, 29, 45, 46.

This view of the subject must be correct because it establishes the divine law, which may not be made void. His word is everlasting truth. Matt. iii. 15. Luke xvi. 17. John vii. 23; x. 35.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VERSE 29. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

It was said on xxiv. 17 of Leviticus, that the intention of the inspired writer is to be considered as well as his words. One instance serves as a fulfillment of the judgment. The language is in the form of a command, although it is only a prediction—a prediction of a judgment upon them for their disregard of the divine law. It does not specify the number of instances that would occur. It only shows the kind of judgment. And it did occur. 2 Kings vi. 29.

As the history only affords a single instance of its fulfillment, 2 Kings vi. 28, 29, we learn that one fact is a fulfillment of a prophecy; as the prophecy of Joel ii. 28 is fulfilled by one instance. Acts ii. 17. So also Matt. xxvii. 44 with Luke xxiii. 39. Mark xv. 32 with Luke xxiii. 37.

Keeping in mind this rule will help us to understand other Scriptures. But we should also recollect that much occurred that has not been recorded.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VERSE 28. Notwithstanding, no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the Lord of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord.

That which is solemnly consecrated to the Lord was to be his unconditionally and inevitably. Samuel, when a child, was so consecrated or devoted, and remained his for life. But there was special provision showing what might, and what might not be offered as burnt offerings. No human sacrifice was lawful except one, and that was Jesus Christ.

Jephtha so devoted that which first came forth of his house when he returned from his victory over Ammon. And that was his daughter, his only child. And he offered her as a burnt sacrifice to God; being bound by his vow to do so. But he erred in making such a vow. When a man makes a vow to do an unlawful thing, he fastens sin upon himself; for he must sin either in the breach or the performance; for either is sin.

The most holy things which the Hebrews devoted to God were not necessarily to be burnt upon the altar; but were the Lord's, and unredeemable, and were given to the priest, and if they were suitable, they might be eaten by his family, Num. xviii. 8, 9, or burnt upon the altar, if they were proper for such offerings.

This passage does not specify what use those things so devoted to God were to be put to. But it shows that they were unredeemable.

29. None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.

Knowing this law, the Hebrews could not devote for sacrifices any thing that was unclean; for the priest could not accept such; neither could the Hebrews so devote them.

Some obscurity may seem to be involved in this passage from the mistake of the translators in saying *devoted of men*, instead of saying *devoted by men*. The things devoted were not men, but things devoted by men, and were to be detained by the priests for any use to which they were appropriate. So Samuel was retained for a holy and appropriate employment. Clean beasts were retained for sacrifices, and for food for the priests' families. Other things were retained for some use that was appropriate under the direction of the priests.

An unclean beast was not to be destroyed by the breaking of his neck; for that provision related only to the case of its not being redeemed by its owner; and was made to save the owner from sacrilegiously keeping and using what was the Lord's, and unredeemed.

If such an unclean beast were in possession of the priest, it could be put to some menial service, like that to which the Midianitish captives, beasts and asses were put, which were given and devoted to the Lord, out of the spoils of Midian. Num. xxxi. 30.

The various dispositions of different things could not be repeated every time that any one was mentioned.

Nothing that is devoted by men shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death, has the condition, that it be a clean beast suitable for a burnt offering, which were such as men could devote, or the priests receive for such purpose.

If the explanation is not here annexed, it was because it was unnecessary, being clearly stated in other places. And if so clearly given they may not be disregarded. See Num. xviii. 14, 15. Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine. Every thing that openeth the matrix [the first-born] in all flesh, which they bring unto the Lord, whether it be of men or of beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. Here the different disposition of different subjects is clearly stated.

And in Num. xviii. 17, this passage, Lev. xxvii. 29, is also explained, viz: But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar. This limits and explains Lev. xxvii. 28, 29. It shows that those devoted that were to be put to death, were such clean beasts as were suitable for sacrifices.

The meat offering was holy as other devoted things; it was not to be burnt upon the altar, except a handful of it for a memorial. See Lev. ii. 12. As for the oblation of the first-fruits, ye shall offer them unto the Lord; but they shall not be burnt upon the altar for a sweet savor.

NUMBERS.



CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 16. And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering.

The various duties of the high priest's office divided between Aaron and his sons: each was to be the head in his own department.

20. But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

The sacredness of the ministry and of the Sabbath are incomprehensible to many. Nadab and Abihu in their not comprehending such sanctity were burnt. Miriam was afflicted with leprosy. Korah, Dathan, Abiram and Uzza were slain. And King Saul lost the throne. *Exod. xxxv. 3. Lev. x. 1, 2. Num. xii. 10. 1 Sam. xiii. 12, 13.* So sacred were divine things, that when the high priest went into the tabernacle to arrange the sacred vessels for removal; the Koathites whose duty it was to carry them, might not go in to look on when they were covered. This would have been so profane as to be punished with death. The men of Bethshemesh were slain for looking into the ark. *2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. 1 Sam. vi. 19.*

Divine things are also sacred under the gospel. When it was said to Ananias, "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God," *Acts v. 4,* Ananias had told the apostles an untruth, and what he did to his sacred ministers, was done to God. *Matt. xxv. 40, 45; x. 40-42. 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19, 20.*

This fact of imputation to God appears still stronger when it is applied also to the treatment of private members of the Lord's body. The children of Israel could not approach God in the public ordinances to administer them, only through the appointed ministry set apart, or sanctified to that business. *Chap. viii. 19-22.*

The same is true under the gospel dispensation: the exposition of the divine word, and administration of divine ordinances are appropriated to a class of men set apart to the work. *Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. 1 Cor. ix. 16. Heb. v. 4. Num. xii. 1-11; iii. 10. Acts xix. 16, 17.*

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 9. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed.

Moses was a servant, a prophet of the Lord, and was accountable to him, and not to them. Who made Aaron and Miriam to be his judges? While he with great fidelity, and with singular meekness, was serving the Lord as judge of Israel, they arraigned him at their bar; and severely rebuked him for officiating in the office to which he was called of God. "And his anger was kindled against them; and he departed." He departed, *i. e.*, ceased to be manifest, ceased to show his presence; for he ever remains essentially present everywhere. He was displeased with the arrogance and contumacy of Aaron and Miriam; and he smote Miriam with leprosy. On two accounts we might suppose Aaron's offense to be the greatest, on account of his high office, and on account of his being the stronger vessel. But her offense was the greatest for assuming and arrogating equality with him whom God had placed above her. "Thy desire shall be to thine husband, and he shall rule over thee." Gen. iii. 16. Eph. v. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

In this arrogant and aspiring attempt to usurp authority over the Lord's servant, or to be equal with him, was a piece of high-handed mutiny and presumption.

But weak human nature since the fall is prone to such arrogance, when deep humiliation and self-abasement would be more becoming vile worms of the dust.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 16. One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

This clause or provision is frequently repeated in the law. It is added to every statute to which it is applicable; and can be applied or extended to no other. Exod. xxix. 33; xxx. 33. Lev. xxii. 10, 12, 13. Num. i. 51; iii. 10, 38. Deut. xiv. 21; xv. 3; xvii. 15; xxiii. 20. 1 Kings ix. 20, 22.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 8. Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes.

The rod was the same which was used in his miracles from the beginning. Exod. iv. 17; viii. 17.

11. And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly.

The offense of Moses and Aaron was not in smiting the rock; for his being commanded to take it with him implied its use; and besides this he was commanded to use it in a similar instance. Exod. xvii. 6.

The Psalmist also confirms this view by ascribing their offense to speaking unadvisedly with their lips. Ps. cvi. 33

As the inspired Psalmist imputes the offense to speaking unadvisedly, we can not impute it to any thing else. They said, "Hear now, you rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" God was wronged, not they. They had no right to make the cause altogether their own, as if they only had cause to be grieved; and as if they and not God was to fetch water out of the rock. 1 Sam. viii. 7.

Besides they knew that this was the true view of the subject. Exod. xvi. 7, 8.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 6. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

It is remarkable that wicked men can be orthodox, and intelligent in theology, when it suits their purpose.

Balak is commendable for two traits of character here displayed. He rightly judged that Israel was too powerful for him; and that he ought to employ the best means of safety.

And then he knew that Balaam was a true prophet, and his prophetic declarations would certainly be fulfilled.

And another trait, and a third, is that a mere peradventure is a sufficient encouragement for undertaking an enterprise. In this his faith appears to have been more clear and decided than that of many better men. But it was spurious in that it did not work by love either to God or to men.

Like the faith of the sons of Sceva, it was strong enough, but unauthorized, and without love.

Notwithstanding, he was very wicked. He wished to have God's chosen people cursed and destroyed for his safety; although he did not know that they would ever molest him. It was an act of high malevolence, and doing evil that good might come.

He was further guilty of sacrilege and profanity in brow-beating a prophet to compel him to profane the Spirit of prophecy, and speak lies in the name of the Lord. But he had his reward as they may expect who trifle with sacred things.

Prophets are sometimes unregenerate men, and evil men. King Saul was among the prophets; but as it was only on a few occasions, he was not generally called a prophet. Abimelech, Laban, Manoah, Sarah, and many others, had revelations; and were not all pious; for piety was not essential to a prophet or an apostle. Gen. xx. 6; xxxi. 24. Judges xiii. 3, 12. Rom. ix. 12. John vi. 70. Balaam being a true prophet, his word was infallible; yet he was not better than Balak.

Although the Lord recognized Balaam's prophetic office by giving him leave to accept Balak's invitation to go to Midian; yet it is written, that the Lord was angry with him because he went. And it is written of him, that he loved the wages of unrighteousness. 2 Pet. ii. 15. Num. xxii. 32. Gen. xli. 25. John xi. 51. 1 Sam. x. 10; xviii. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

We also learn the strange or unnatural mixture of faith with the most inveterate impiety. Devils acknowledged Christ to be the Son of God, and even prayed to him for leave to enter the swine; yet with this faith, and the answer of their prayer, they remained devils still. The freebooters while in communion with the Roman Catholic Church were pirates; just as heathen men did as recorded in 2 Kings xvii. 24-33.

The unhallowed blending of outward religion with ungodliness ever abounds in Christendom. The Pharisees exemplify it, as do the Antinomians, and all ungodly professors who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and all who say, Lord, Lord, without obeying him; and all who draw nigh with their mouth and their lips while their hearts are far off.

How many believe in divine things—believe the Bible, and

live in carnal security, while devils believe and tremble. It is no wonder the apostle should say, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him?" It is no wonder that another should say, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." All the pious must agree on this subject. Jas. ii. 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VERSE 14. For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

Inspired writers use different terms for the same thing, as desert and wilderness in this passage. There appear to have been two supplies of quails, and two supplies of water from the rock. They could not be the same; for the first was in the wilderness of Sin which was nearer to the Red Sea than Zin.

Besides at the first supply Moses and Aaron showed the meekness of wisdom, while in this they were irreverent. Exod. xvi. 7, 8; xvii. 2. Num. xx. 10.

The first was at Rephidim nearer to the Red Sea, while this was at Kadesh Barnea near the Dead Sea. The first was in the wilderness of Sin before they reached Sinai; while this was in the wilderness of Zin by the Dead Sea, and in that part of Canaan which afterward fell to the tribe of Judah.

The first was in the first year of their traveling in the wilderness; while this was in the thirty-seventh.

The first was during Miriam's life; this was after her death.

In the first instance Moses was directed to smite the rock; while in this he was directed to speak to it. But as he was commanded to take the rod it is natural to infer that he was to use it by smiting the rock with it as he did the rivers and the dust. Exod. vii. 17; viii. 16; xvii. 5, 6.

In the first instance Moses was to take some of the elders with him; in this he was to assemble the congregation, to witness the goodness and the mighty power of God, and to be ready at the place to enjoy the refreshing fountain. The first was immediately preceding the war with Amalek, while this

was long after. Exod. xvii 7, 8. Num xx. 1, 8. And there were many journeys of the Hebrews between the two instances.

Both these places were appropriately denominated Meribah, because of the strivings of the people.

We have no ground for the belief that either of these rocks followed the camp of the Hebrews. The metaphorical or Spiritual Rock followed; but this rock was Christ, who was ever with them to give them all needed grace. 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VERSES 1, 2. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites.

Midian had hired Balaam to curse Israel, and thus to bring destruction upon them. And the Lord would destroy them. Moses had resided forty years in Midian, and married his wife there. But her father's family were not in Midian; for we read of them as being with or near the Amalekites when King Saul was sent to destroy Amalek.

3. And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the Lord of Midian.

As Midian had offended against Israel, they had therein offended against the Lord. Matt. xxv. 40.

It is therefore no discrepancy, that in one place it is called avenging yourselves, and in another avenging the Lord.

5. So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

Phinehas, a priest, accompanied this expedition. But whether one of the thousands was of the tribe of Levi, we do not know; for as Joseph was two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, they had twelve without Levi.

7. And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

On the suggestion of Balaam, Balak had enticed Israel into sin in the matter of Peor. For this they were destroyed, and for their other ungodliness: and Balaam perished with them.

He had enlisted in their cause against Israel, and it was just that he perish with them. It is written, "The wicked shall not be unpunished."

11. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts.

This spoil was taken to the camp of Israel, and divided as God directed.

As the victory was from the Lord, they voluntarily offered as a thank offering all the jewels and most precious things of the spoils taken from Midian.

As they had conquered five kings of Midian, and destroyed their people, and returned without the loss of a man, they were under great obligation to gratitude.

The captives taken were made bondmaids; for the males were destroyed.

Of these bondmaids the Lord took a share, and demanded it of the prophet. This portion which the Lord claimed was given to the priests, and to their service.

The monarchy which God instituted in Israel, at their request, was an absolute monarchy; not such at their request, but it was such by divine appointment. And every man knows that monarchy is not sinful, although it includes all that slavery includes, and much more, even the power of life and death.

If monarchy, which contains all of slavery, and much more, is not sinful, then it follows, that slavery, which contains less, is not sinful. This is as plain to every one as any truth can be.

Monarchy and slavery may be political evils; but that is a different thing from their being moral evils. The government of Rome over the Hebrews was a political evil; but they submitted to it as they were in duty bound to do. It was not sinful in Rome in that they instituted a monarchical government over their colonies; it was sinful for them to interfere with the Hebrews in any way.

The Israelites themselves would have erected a monarchical government over themselves if they could, and grieved that they could not. But they would have put over them a son of David.

There is no principle in slavery that does so much violence to man's natural rights as monarchy does. And if one be not sinful, why is the other? 1 Sam. viii. 7-18. But there are those who hate light and come not to it. John iii. 20.

Dear reader, as I love your soul, let me entreat you to come to the light, and to receive the truth in the love of it; lest you grieve the Holy Spirit, and he leave you to fill up your cup.

David ruled over Israel as an absolute monarch, and was never condemned for doing so.

The husband is given authority over his wife, the parent over his child, the elder brother in Israel over the younger, and the master over the servant; and these by divine authority. Thus we have line upon line, precept upon precept. Knowledge is easy to him who desires it. John vii. 17.

28. And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep.

The Lord claimed and took one soul of five hundred, and had them delivered to the priests. Do those know what they do who maintain that this was wicked? The Lord took these souls as chattels; the priests held them as chattels; used them as chattels: and thus justified before men such taking, holding, and using.

And the Lord confirms the same in the gospel. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2.

If the faithful minister who teaches these truths, and is therefore worthy of commendation, and yet receives persecution, what a backslidden state of the church does it exhibit? If politicians, acting as civilians, should oppose monarchy, either national or domestic, let them oppose it as civilians, and only on civil or political grounds. And the church has not a word of objection. But if they oppose it on moral grounds they blaspheme God and his doctrine: and then the pious are aroused to lift up their voice as a trumpet to cry aloud, and spare not; for it is purely and only a civil matter; and does not belong to religion or morality.

CHAPTER XXXV.

VERSE 12. And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

If the avenger of blood, being a brother or a near friend of

him who was slain, should overtake the manslayer before he reached the city of refuge he might kill him; therefore there were six cities of refuge, that there might be greater opportunity of reaching one of them. If the slayer were guilty of murder in the first degree, yet he might take refuge in one of them until his case was tried by the elders of his own city, who were the congregation. Deut. xix. 12.

31. Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

No commutation of this capital punishment was allowed—no imprisonment for life—nothing might be substituted in the room of his execution. The strictness of this law has no connection with the Jewish dispensation—has no dependence upon it; but it is older, being enacted in the moral law given to Noah. Gen. ix. 5, 6.

DEUTERONOMY.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 17. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's.

In being a judge of a court, a juror or an arbitrator, a man must do simple and exact justice toward the parties, whether they be rich or poor, high or low, in the fear of God.

39. Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither.

Here is a promise and a prophecy which involved the will and the actions of men; and yet they are given without any reserve or conditions, because the wills and hearts of all men are in the hand of God, whereby he was able to secure their fulfillment; for he would preserve those children from these evil acts, which had prevented their fathers from entering the promised land.

These children were fifty-nine years of age and under. Num. xiv. 31, 32.

This promise and prophecy did not include necessarily every individual; for some of them may have died of sickness; but if one-half of them entered Canaan, the promise and prophecy had been completely fulfilled by the survivors who were the representatives of the nation, and were the nation. We have an instance in point. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, had engaged to go all of them ready armed over Jordan with their brethren to assist them in taking Canaan.

This covenant was deemed to be completely fulfilled when less than one-half of them performed it: only forty thousand out of one hundred and eight thousand armed men performed the covenant. Num. ii. 11, 15. Josh. iv. 13.

In many instances this rule must be applied. The promise of God to Abraham concerning his seed, was actually verified

only to a part, which was taken as a representation of his seed; for the branches of the olive-tree did not all remain. Rom. ix. 6, 27; xi. 1-22. Some were broken off.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 12. The Horim also dwelt in Seir beforetime.

The Horim were the earlier inhabitants of Mount Seir, and before Esau was born. Gen. xiv. 5-12.

Adding s to plurals in im, is a corruption. Correct examples are frequently furnished by the translators in the names, Abarim, Abel-maim, Abel-shittim, Akrabbim, Avim, Baalim, Denanim, Donanim, Engannim, Georathaim, Hazzurim, Kittim, Cherubim, Seraphim.

30. But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.

The fact of Sihon's inhospitality, and the consequent destruction of him, showed both the purpose and the hand of God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

We know that God's dealings with Sihon were right; for otherwise God would not have so dealt with him. Any contrary thought would be blasphemy.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 2. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you.

His word given in infinite wisdom and goodness, and therefore it must be perfect: to add or diminish, must destroy its perfection and corrupt it.

24. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

In saying, The Lord thy God is a consuming fire, it teaches us his infinite purity, the strictness of his law, the immutability of his whole character; and it teaches his people the fear

the awe, and the reverence that are due unto him in all his ways, and in all his words.

This is an admonition to his children, and not the wicked exclusively. It is our God whom we are so to regard. How many times is his character exemplified to Israel, when the fire of God burnt among them, and caused thousands of them to perish. Deut. iv. 24–28. Num. xvi. 31–33; xiv. 22, 23.

This passage is perverted by some who without authority add to it, by saying, *God out of Christ* is a consuming fire; when it is directed to his own chosen and beloved people.

Of Abram it is said, A horror of great darkness fell upon him. Gen. xv. 12; and Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. Heb. xii. 21.

Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Ps. iv. 4. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Ps. ii. 11. Shall not his excellency make you afraid? And his dread fall upon you. Job xiii. 11. While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Ps. lxxxviii. 15. Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works. Ps. lxvi. 3.

With God is terrible majesty. Job xxxvii. 32. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Dan. x. 8. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God. Dan. vi. 26. For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth. Ps. xlvii. 2.

It is the godly who understand the dreadful majesty of the Holy One. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. Ps. lxxxix. 7. And fear not thou them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matt. x. 28. The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. Prov. i. 7. Mal. ii. 5. Jer. xlv. 10, 11. Ps. xxii. 23; xxv. 14; lv. 19; lxxv. 5; xc. 11. Neh. i. 5. Ps. xxxiii. 8; cxix. 161. Num. xxvii. 13, 14.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 8. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth.

The seas and rivers are in altitude beneath the earth, or their surface is lower than the surface of the earth.

15. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day.

Although the Sabbath was instituted at the end of the first week, to commemorate the finishing of the work of creation and resting or ceasing from it; yet there could be accessions to it or new reasons added like this, their resting from Egyptian bondage. The resting of the Lord from his work of suffering and humiliation was a reason for translating it from the seventh to the first day of the week.

So the rainbow could be adopted as a token of God's covenant with men and with beasts, that the flood should not be repeated, even if it always had attended rain. So the stone of long continuance could be adopted as a witness of Joshua's covenant with Israel; as is so common with surveyors to make any stationary thing, as a stone, a stake, or a tree, a sign or memorial of a line or a corner to a plantation. Gen. ix. 12. Josh. xxiv. 27.

22. These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire.

The ten commandments were a summary of the whole moral code; and therefore were worthy to have been engraved in tables of stone, and as a symbol of their abiding and unchangeable nature; for the moral law can not be changed.

This miracle, like others, was so public, was so exhibited before the whole nation, that no one could entertain any doubt or be mistaken.

And Moses appeals to them, "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly." Moses would not have said this to the people if it had not been true, and if they knew it were false. If miracles were wrought in this public manner, like

dividing the waters of the Red Sea, and the waters of Jordan, then the common people knew whether Moses was inspired and sent of God just as well as he did.

The apostles and primitive Christians, from the open manner of Christ's miracles, knew that he was sent of God and was the Savior of sinners.

And even wicked men among them saw thousands of his miracles, and could not but know that he was the Lord from heaven. It is significant to notice how they scrutinized the man who having been blind from his birth was given sight. And the event showed that the miracle had been performed in truth. This miracle with a thousand others performed by the Lord, and with his resurrection, and the miracles subsequently wrought by his disciples to whom he communicated power for that purpose, were a clear and satisfactory proof of the truth of the gospel, which admitted of no doubt—was capable of no mistake. Those who did not receive it acted against reason, because their hearts were hardened and their minds blinded.

We ought to be thankful to God that the evidence for the truth and authenticity of the Scriptures is so clear.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 25. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.

A negative righteousness by which they would avoid those calamities and national judgments which transgressions would bring upon them. Such a righteousness is of immense temporal advantage to a nation; but it would not atone for one sin, nor save any soul.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 6. For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.

If God can elect a nation to bestow his love upon them, and to make an everlasting covenant with them to glorify himself

by them; to give them the best country in the world, to give them revelations from heaven, to raise up the Redeemer from among them, and to unite the infinite Godhead to him to work out redemption for the souls of sinners, and to be their God; and to give them peculiar privileges and blessings above all the nations around them, then the election of individuals is established; if one can be the other can; if one is true the other is; for both stand on the same principle.

The lawgiver proceeds to verse twenty-two, with a detail of the peculiar blessings and privileges which this covenant secures to Israel. As a nation consists of individuals, its election is an election of all the individuals that constitute it.

But he expressly informs them that these peculiar privileges and blessings were not bestowed upon them out of respect to their persons, but of his own goodness, of his own free and sovereign grace, in which he has mercy on whom he will have mercy. See verse 7; ix. 4, 5, 6; x. 17.

The infinite Jehovah does not respect the persons of sinners; for they are altogether unworthy and vile in his holy sight. Their vileness and unworthiness are, in some cases, the motive to show us the freeness and riches of his grace. Paul gives us one of the reasons of his election. 1 Tim. i. 16. Another reason that he assigned was that he had not committed the unpardonable sin. But this was a negative reason. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Jas. i. 5, 9.

16. And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.

The Lord is the sovereign king and judge over all his works to destroy and to preserve as he sees good. He destroyed all the nations of the old world by a flood, saving only Noah and his family. He slew Nadab and Abihu the priests; he slew the families of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; he destroyed all the cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, with their children. He takes away individuals of all ages. There is nothing in this passage that shows any different principle; for all men have sinned and forfeited their lives, their bodies and their souls into the hands of divine justice; we are all under condemnation; if we had been destroyed long ago with all the race, both the law and justice of the Holy One would have "approved it well." But if he have not done so, it was not that justice forbade it; but that in his mercy and long-suffering he spares some of us to reveal his goodness, and to establish

his kingdom of grace, and to make some beacons of light in the world.

He has never relinquished his scepter nor his sovereign right to do what he will with his own, to destroy sinners when he will, or to have mercy on whom he will.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 2. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

God knows all things with intuitive knowledge. He knew them before the world was, and yet has a wise purpose to know them historically; and they must transpire—be acted; for he grounds his judgments on men's deeds, that all the universe may perceive the rectitude of his administration. xiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. He could have bought Israel out of Egypt without putting Pharaoh to the discipline of the ten plagues; but he would take off restraint from him, that he might reveal his real character. He took off restraint from Sihon, king of Heshbon, for a similar purpose, to give Israel occasion to destroy both him and his people. Deut. ii. 30. He proved our first parents by the tree of forbidden fruit. He proves every one of us by setting life and death before us, to know historically whether we will choose life or death.

16. Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.

The afflictions and blessings which are sent upon God's people are all sent in love; and are calculated in their own nature, and by God's direction, to do only good to them in their result. Thus it is in the severe trial of Jacob in the loss of his son, and with Joseph in all his afflictions in Egypt, all were made to work for their good. Thus it was with the heavy and protracted calamities of Job. It is written, "And we know that all things shall work together for good, to them who love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Rom. viii. 28.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 4. Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land.

Although God will reward men, both good and evil, for everything they do that is even morally good, still these rewards are less than this great favor of their being put in possession of that rich inheritance which was of grace, and in performing his covenant with their fathers.

The salvation of the soul is never the reward of such works of men, but only the reward of the propitiation of Christ. What had the wicked world done to purchase the mission of Christ to come and die for the ungodly? Rom. iv. 5, and v. 6. What had Saul of Tarsus done, when Jesus appeared to him on his way to Damascus, breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples?

The sentiment of this passage is rich in every Christian heart. It abides with him every day and every hour, warming his heart with love, gratitude, humility, zeal and every grace. The carnal mind can not feel it. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 7.

7. Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord.

The prophet Balaam, while harboring the sentiments of an evil and unsanctified heart, was, notwithstanding, under the sweet guidance of the Divine Spirit, which led him to say, he [the Lord] hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. Num. xxiii. 21.

Here is a seeming discrepancy between Moses and Balaam. But it is only seeming; for both are equally true. The fact is that God had seen much iniquity and perverseness in Israel. Balaam did not dispute this truth; but he was discussing another subject, viz: the destruction of Israel, which Balak wanted. Balaam was speaking to this point only, and says that God had not seen iniquity in Israel to lead him to destroy them. So the Lord spake to the point in hand when he said, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; though both

had sinned thousands of times; yet neither had sinned as the reason of his being born blind. But he was born blind rather for the purpose of the miracle of healing him, to give evidence of Christ's mission. All who came out of Egypt that were men perished for their wickedness without being allowed to enter Canaan, but Joshua and Caleb; even Moses and Aaron died in the wilderness for their sins. The beauty of Scripture truths only appears when we understand them: when we get the mind of the Spirit.

Israel could not be destroyed as a people, because the covenant made with their fathers would not admit of it. They must possess Canaan.

This also illustrates the doctrine of the certain final perseverance of the saints: they are given to Christ as his sheep, and as the crown and reward of his sufferings, and he must have them—he must see his seed.

They are not less guilty, and less deserving of destruction than others; yet they will be brought to repentance and glory. If God chooses some of the chief of sinners, such as Paul, it illustrates the riches of grace in saving sinners. Their great sins will not be in the way, if they repent of them and forsake them: and this the covenant with Christ insures.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 15. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were chosen patriarchs beloved of God; and were they with whom God founded and reared his church, and was now blessing them with its infinite privileges. Matt.

17. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

The Sovereign of the universe has varieties in his dealings with sinners according to his infinite wisdom and goodness; but he never does any thing like showing favor or disfavor to any because they are high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, reputable or disreputable. All the great variety of his treatment to individuals is based upon reason, or grounds

furnished by his infinite perfections, and by his covenant with his Son.

The two thieves on the cross were both alike disreputable. Jacob and Esau were both alike without character when the Lord told their mother what a difference there would be made between them. Rom. ix. 11, 12.

If it be asked, why such ungodly and unworthy persons are elected? the answer is, because there are no others. All are vile and ungodly, deserving eternal destruction.

If salvation be of grace, it can be bestowed upon Mary Magdalen and Saul of Tarsus as upon any others, if they repent and believe; and indeed it is only applicable to the ungodly; for Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; for the righteous, if there were any, would have no need of grace or salvation by Christ. If infants are as clean and righteous, as some profess to think, they can have no part in the gospel, and can never taste the salvation of Christ. 1 Tim. i. 15. Matt. ix. 13. Mark ii. 17.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 9. And that you may prolong your days in the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed.

If the Lord in infinite mercy and goodness had bound himself with an oath to give Canaan to the Hebrews, he would, in faithfulness to himself and to them, perform the promise.

This promise to Abraham and his seed did not make it necessary to give it to every individual of them, nor to every generation of them; for several generations of them lived and died in Egypt, many of them died in the wilderness, and many died in captivity in a foreign land. It was sufficient that it was given to their heirs, to the representatives of some of them. But sin might cut off individuals, and even whole generations, so as not to prolong their days of possessing or enjoying it, and cause them to be removed by death or captivity; so that faithfulness to God's covenant on their part was a condition of their uninterrupted possession of it.

Israel understood this condition; for Moses had informed them of it. Lev. xxvi. 1, 42. Deut. iv. 26; viii. 19, 20. Jer. xviii. 7-10. See Ps. lv. 23.

Nevertheless the promise to their seed as a people was peremptory, and unconditional, during the continuance of that

dispensation. But the covenant with Christ concerning the salvation of the elect, is established upon better promises, Heb. viii. 6, 9, 10; for although the salvation of these is also conditional, yet the certainty that the elect will comply with the conditions, will repent and believe, and persevere unto the end, are all made sure in the covenant made with Christ for them, as it is written in Ps. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi. 33; xxiv. 7. Heb. viii. 10.

The covenant made with Abraham relating to political blessings and privileges was therefore in this respect quite different from the covenant made with Christ relating to spiritual blessings. The former did not secure the privileges to individuals and generations, but to some of their representatives as it is this day: they stand before the world as a separate people with a promise to be brought in with the fullness of the Gentiles. Rom. xi. 25, 26. But the covenant with Christ concerns individuals, and secures all the blessings to every one of his seed. The kingdom of Christ under the gospel dispensation is a superior dispensation. It is only a spiritual kingdom. The condition in the promise of prolonging their days in Canaan is entirely consistent, and in harmony with the sixth commandment.

These principles are exemplified in denominating that first covenant as having a worldly sanctuary and carnal ordinances imposed upon them only for time, Heb. ix. 10; and in the proposal to Moses to destroy the Hebrews, and make him and his seed the only heirs of Israel. Deut. ix. 13, 14.

The covenant with the Savior is unconditional as to its effect concerning every one of his people. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. All that the Father giveth to him shall come unto him, shall be raised up at the last day. John vi. 37.

If the salvation of the elect is conditional, they must repent, believe and persevere, or not be saved; for if after they repent and believe, if they fall away, they will be finally lost, as it will be impossible to renew them again to repentance; yet they are secured by the promise that they will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. 1 Pet. i. 5. Rev. iii. 10. John xvii. 2. Rom. viii. 28-30. John v. 24; x. 28. Heb. vi. 4. Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 32. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Nothing which God hath not taught can be necessary to our salvation, nor to his declarative glory so as to need a place in the code of revelation.

For us to pretend to improve it by either addition or a diminution, is arrogant and profane, is professing to be wiser than he, which is denying his perfection. We may propose amendments to the translation in some places, and wish it were more accurate or intelligible, as Gen. iv. 1, 26. Exod. xxii. 12. 1 Kings ii. 9. Matt. iii. 16. Acts xx. 28; viii. 38, 39. Heb. ii. 9. Rev. xiii. 8. But this is not like a desire to alter revelation.

Revelation ought not to be agreeable to carnal men, nor to the remains of carnality in good men; but being aware of this we presume that God is right, and that our carnal feelings are erroneous and vile. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 3. Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.

It appears from this passage, as well as from others, that the sincerity of God's people needs to be tested, tried, proved, whether they will receive and obey his revealed word or not. And therefore he suffers false teachers, heretics of various kinds to abound in the world. 1 Cor. xi. 19. 2 Pet. ii. 2.

We may often wish that there were no such hindrances to the progress of the gospel; no such enemies of souls to harden the hearts of sinners, and prejudice them against the humbling doctrines of the gospel. But the Lord knows of their necessity. It must needs be that offenses come, but woe unto him by whom they come. They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. Matt. xxiv. 24. These trials encompass all

men. Rev. iii. 10. Adam and Eve were tried by the serpent and fell. Pharaoh in Egypt was tried. Joseph's brethren were tried when they betrayed and sold him. The church is tried now to prove her faithfulness, and whether she will be drawn away from the spiritual kingdom of Christ, to the carnal things of the kingdoms of this world. John xviii. 33, 36. If any do not stand in these trials, but suffer themselves to be drawn away and enticed by any means, then they prove that their love is not genuine; and must fear that they are rejected. 2 Pet. ii. 2. 1 John ii. 19. 2 John 9. Matt. vii. 16, 20.

By this proof of men's hearts God knows them demonstratively. He knows them by facts; for he judges men by their deeds, their actions. This is what is meant by the Lord's proving and knowing men. For action is the fruit which shows what the tree is.

As the Most High knows all things, some may be perplexed with this subject; but they need not be; for we can see that there were reasons for his knowing things historically, or as events that have transpired. Gen. xxii. 12. The Lord Jesus asked the disciples, "How many loaves have ye?" And it is written, "He said this to prove them; for he, himself, knew what he would do." On the same principle men need to pray as much as if he did not know all things. Even Christ who was God often prayed. Men must bear fruit—must show their character. Matt. xii. 33, 35, 37. Jas. ii. 22-26. If works show what the heart is, then there is good reason why men should be judged by their works. And in order to this they must do these works, or they would be non-existent. 1 Pet. i. 17. John x. 27.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 6. And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat.

When our version of the Bible was made, A. D. 1610, the auxiliary verbs, as shall, will and may, had not appropriate uses as they have now. Here is therefore no command to eat of them, but liberty, as if it had been said, "Of them ye may eat."

Those beasts which they might use for food had two marks, chewing the cud, and dividing the hoof into two parts.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 1. At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.

At the end of every seven years the Hebrews were to have a release of debts and claims against one another, which was a kind of jubilee. It was the seventh year that was the year of release. See verses 9, 12.

What has before been said limiting the provisions of the jubilee to the Hebrews, is shown in verse 3. "Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thy hand shall release."

The same is taught in chap. xiv. 21, of selling to a stranger what they, the Hebrews, might not eat.

Strangers, aliens living among them, were not allowed all the privileges of the Hebrews, neither were they subject to all their restrictions. See verses 12, 17. Chap. xvii. 15. Lev xxv. 39.

12. And if thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.

But this privilege was to be granted because he was a Hebrew, and for that only; but if he were not a Hebrew, it was different, for then both himself and his children after him were perpetual bondmen.

This express restriction of this law to a Hebrew authorizes the inference that the bondage of others was perpetual. And this is not only sustained by this natural inference, but is sustained also by express law. Lev. xxv. 39-46.

The Lord Jesus Christ teaches us, that his sheep hear his voice and they follow him. John x. 27. And he warns us, "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." He said again, "If a man love me, he will keep my sayings, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John xiv. 23. See com. on Exod. xxi. 1-6.

It appears that an adult Hebrew woman was not subject to perpetual bonds, as was a minor, a youth in her father's house. Exod. xxi. 7.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 18. Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

This precept relates to the civil government and not to the ecclesiastical, for that was in the hands of the priests. Num. iii. 10. Deut. xix. 17, 19.

The whole government of both church and state in the time of the judges had been in their hands. But when the law was given by Moses, the priesthood was appropriated to Aaron and his brethren. But judges ruled much as they had before, until Moses instituted civil magistrates. Exod. xviii. 25.

The spirit of prophecy abode with the Urim and Thummim. And on that account the priests were constituted a court of appeal in civil matters. Deut. xvii. 8, 9.

Both civil and ecclesiastical government are then of divine appointment, are divine institutions, which is the reason why resistance to either is resistance to God. Deut. xvii. 12. Num. xi. 24, 25. Deut. xxix. 9, 10. Rom. xiii. 1-6.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 1. When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

The translators had arranged this sentence better, had they said, "For the Lord thy God who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, is with thee."

This criticism is more needful in many other places, in which more obscurity attends an injudicious position of the adjuncts than in this place. Rom. ix. 3. Rev. xiii. 8.

The duty of faith inculcated in this passage has been strikingly illustrated on many occasions, as on Samson's meeting thousands. Judges xv. 14, 16. On Jacob's meeting Esau, coming against him with four hundred men. Gen. xxxiii. 1-3. On David's meeting Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii. 32.

It was revealed to the people, "That the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Eccl. ix. 11.

Revelation contains every encouragement to faith; but poor fallen man's unbelieving heart prevents his receiving it.

5. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.

Civil government should be administered in mercy. This too is the best economy; for if God rules over all, there is more hope of success to those who are upright and merciful, than there is to the wicked and cruel. Chap. ix. 4, 5, 6. That obedience and humanity are better than sacrifice is taught. 1 Sam. xv. 22. Mark vii. 11, 13.

15. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

The Lord made a difference in these nations in and about Palestine: those that were in Palestine were to be utterly destroyed; and those remote; they need not utterly destroy; but might take of them spoil for themselves.

Here then was a difference made between the nations that were near and those that were farther off. That there is no respect of persons with Jehovah can not be made to apply to this regulation; for the provisions did not relate to respect for the persons concerned, but to prudence and discretion. And it appears that a great difference was made between these nations. A great difference is often made between different nations and different individuals. But none is ever made from respect to their persons, but other considerations. It is written, "And the Lord had respect to Abel, and his offering, but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." As we are informed, that, "By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;" we learn that God's respect was for Abel's faith and not for his person; for in such a sense, and in many others, he does respect one and not another.

He converted and saved Saul of Tarsus, when many of his companions were left in their sins; he saved one thief on the cross and left the other. 1 Tim. i. 16. Rom. ix. 18.

If all the pains used to convince men of the divine sovereignty fail, let them ask themselves, whether they would be convinced if one rose from the dead? And let them inquire

whether they ought to believe the Scriptures, and whether every Christian must and will believe them? Ps. cxix. 89, 97, 98.

For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest. Pharaoh and Judas had their influence for evil and their reward; and so must those who dispute the divine perfections.

The fact that Israel were required to destroy every human being, and every brute beast from Canaan is given. Those who are not reconciled to it, will have to settle their accounts at the great day; and then they will know who is right. If they will not know now, they will know then.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 9. So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you.

Some person had been privately murdered in the night; and the utmost vigilance would be necessary to discover the murderer; for their criminality or innocence depended on their faithfulness in this investigation. If the murderer could have been detected and yet was not, the guilt of the murder lies upon them.

14. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

Giving a bondmaid in marriage did not release her from bondage; but marriage and divorce together would. If she had been a fugitive as Hagar was, her bonds had remained; for Hagar's bond remained unimpaired by marriage.

21. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

The object of capital punishment was manifold: the rendering of retributive justice, warding off the guilt of innocent blood from themselves, verse 9, the removal of an injurious person, and the danger that impunity would encourage crime. Such also was the necessity for destroying the Canaanites.

Chap. vii. 1, 5. Such also was the necessity of removing idolaters. Chap. xiii. 6, 7. Respect of persons had no relation to it. Jehovah can melt and bow the hearts and souls of his chosen, without any respect to their persons, and when he abhors them perfectly.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 5. The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.

Men are capable of being deceived and beguiled into sin. Our first parents were so ensnared. And the adversary goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour or destroy.

When any corruption is commenced there are generally thousands ready to the evil. Let one man put on a shawl, and how many thousands stand ready to repeat the abomination and give it currency.

Women are more inventive and versatile; they flare in pants, wristbands, bosoms, collars and surtout coats. They will scarcely be content short of seven abominations. There is a moral in dress; and if this had not been a vice, it had never been interdicted. Every man sees his own vices with jaundiced eyes; sees the mote but not the beam.

Some articles of dress, as shoes and hose, may approximate to each other, but yet are different. The purity, dignity and honor of both sexes are involved in this divine law. Any violation of it is undignified, low, sinful, abominable.

If it does not strike the mind of the reader as a matter of so much consequence, let him thereby know his danger. God is warning him. Will he hear and be warned, or not?

30. A man shall not take his father's wife.

This and the preceding are of infinite importance, or would not have been placed among other infinite and important things, carnal men will not see either the beauty of holiness or the evil of sin. A person is to regard the divine precepts; and he will unless he thinks he is wiser than God.

A man may not marry a widowed step-mother, nor a woman a step-father. By marriage with the parent they became one flesh.

Scriptures may be invalidated and obscured by mystifying them, as this passage does not say whether her husband the father were living or not. But that was not necessary, for it would be incest in either case. The precept is replete with light and plainness as are the divine precepts. While a man is forbidden to marry his mother, Lev. xviii. 7, he is also forbidden in the next verse to marry his father's wife. We know, therefore, that verse 8 relates to a step-mother, or to a father's wife that is not our mother.

Silence respecting the life or death of a father, is also significant, showing that as these two precepts relate to incest, the question about widowhood was irrelevant. That it does relate to incest, and not to adultery, is made clear by verse 20 which prohibits adultery in direct terms.

Another conclusive reason for confining Lev. xviii. 7, 8 to incest, and not adultery, is verse 6, in which it is distinctly shown that the subject is incest, and respects approach to kindred; for the precepts are confined to kindred by affinity and by consanguinity, which shows that they are both incestuous.

The series of precepts concerning incestuous approaches, arranged under Lev. xviii. 6, must end somewhere; and the subject shows that they end with verse 17, for the next verse relates to bigamy, and not to incest; for as far as incest is concerned, it would as really be incest to take a wife's sister after the death of the first, as to take her before.

Thus it is clear that the precepts concerning incest terminate with verse 17 of Lev. xviii; and can not be made to extend to verse 18.

Other passages in the New Testament not only confirm the above interpretation, but show that the moral law respecting incest remains the same under the gospel. The Lord added a proposition to not only confirm the affinity pronounced by Adam, that marriage unites the two into one family relation, into one flesh, as parents and children, brothers and sisters, are one flesh, but also makes it perpetual, saying, "Wherefore they are no more twain." Matt. xix. 5. This supplement to that law so long afterward is of great significance. They never become separated again into two distinct unrelated families as they were before the marriage; no, not after the death of one of the parties; for even then the survivor retains all the union to the deceased party's family that was effected by the marriage. Matt. xix. 5. John the Baptist told Herod, that it was not lawful for him to have his brother Philip's wife. He does not say whether Philip was living or not living, nor does either of the evangelists introduce that irrelevant point. This

fact may show that incest was the ground of the complaint against Herod.

The apostle speaks with decided disapprobation of one who had taken his father's wife. 1 Cor. v. 1. And that she was not his mother but only his step-mother may be supposed from the unheard of absurdity of the contrary. It also may be inferred from the language being conformed to Lev. xviii. 8, where a father's wife is made a different person from a mother, and a subject for a precept by itself. It is disrespectful to the lawgiver to pronounce his law so unintelligible as to absolve us from its obligations.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 5. Nevertheless, the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee.

The curse that Balak wished Balaam to pronounce against Israel, was by the Divine Spirit turned into a blessing. God would not consent to Balaam's wishes, his secret desires to curse Israel.

There might be more ground for the doctrine of transubstantiation here than is found in Matt. xxvi. 26. But there is no ground in either. But if there be no ground where there is the more, there can be none where there is the less.

15. Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee.

The pronouns thou and thee which usually apply to individuals, is here applicable to the nation in their national capacity. The nation is here forbidden to deliver to his heathen master a fugitive who should escape from a heathen country, and should come to Israel for protection.

This is evident from two considerations. One is that the fugitive servant was to be allowed to reside in any of the nation's gates or cities which he might select. "In one of thy gates," *i. e.*, in one of your cities. As individuals did not possess cities, it is evident that the address was to the nation.

Another consideration is that by the Mosaic law, Hebrew servants could be held for six years, and other servants for life, and left for an inheritance to their children forever. It would therefore be a reflection to the lawgiver to suppose that

he made another law which repealed Lev. xxv. 40, 44, 45, and which enabled any servant, by scaling a fence into a neighbor's inclosure, to obtain his freedom. Such inconsistency the divine law may not be charged with.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 6. No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge.

The divine law is replete with the suggestion of mercy and humanity. See chap. xx. 7; and verse 5 of this chapter.

Private families used hand-mills; and if one of the millstones were taken away as a pawn to the creditor, the family would be unable to prepare their daily food. Exod. xxii. 26, 27. "He taketh," instead of he would take, indicative for the potential. Figurative language is common with the divine writers, as Gen. xviii. 2. Deut. xxviii. 13; xxxii. 36. Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Isa. li. 1. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. Exod. xv. 3.

16. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

If we insist upon a liberal construction of this passage as some do to support the doctrine of general atonement, we shall destroy the human race; for if every man be executed, then after the women die, the human family would become extinct. But those men borrow our interpretation when it suits them to do so, and they often find it indispensable.

The prophet is here giving the civil law, and what men—civil rulers—may do; but the doctrine of imputation relates to what the Lord does, whose prerogative is above ours.

This passage does not militate against the doctrine of imputation, but takes it out of the jurisdiction of men. That all the human family sinned when Adam did, and fell under the curse of death when he did, are plainly revealed. The dependence of children upon parents now, is not the dependence of all men upon Adam, for all parents are not federal heads as he was. As parents are now depraved, it is equally certain that their offspring will also be depraved, for none can bring a clean thing out of an unclean.

Human courts may not punish men because they are wicked, so may they not put their children to death because they are wicked. But this statute forbids civil rulers to punish children for their fathers' crimes, for this is God's prerogative. *Exod. xx. 5. Num. xvi. 23-33.*

While we may not execute parents for children's crimes, nor children for their parents' crimes, yet we must execute those whose wickedness is evinced in certain overt acts. God takes the lives of infants for Adam's sin, but man may not.

The injunction, that, "Every man be put to death for his own sin," doubtless means only every man that commits a capital crime shall be punished for his own sin only. In many passages the meaning is not expressed, but is so intimated that it may be clearly understood.

So this injunction, though not mentioning only one sex, must be equally applied to both according to analysis. We therefore learn that revelation is to be interpreted. But in interpreting, the divine meaning is to be given, and that only, at the peril of the interpreter. *Neh. viii. 8.* Ministers are authorized to expound—to interpret—the divine word so as to give its true meaning; but they are not authorized to corrupt, pervert, wrest or destroy it. Their exposition must exhibit the mind of the Spirit in the word.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 3. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

It is remarkable that revelation coincides with reason when the subject is not too high for it. Although the citizen who is punished with unreasonable severity for some real crime, would not be any more vile than he would have been had his punishment been reasonable, yet he would seem to be more vile. This is the law of nature. And it may explain the proverbial cruelty of step-mothers, who for the lack of parental affection, have dealt cruelly with children, by which means the minds of both parents become soured toward the children. Indeed it will be very difficult ever to love again any person whom we have deeply injured in any way. We must be kind to our fellow-creatures if we would love them, which will

conciliate mutual affection. Consciousness of wrong on the part of him who hath done it, will induce him ever to believe that he is abhorred by the other party, and this belief will prevent him from feeling cordial to one who he supposes must hate him. It is written, "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted therewith." Prov. xxvi. 28.

To produce confidence it is necessary that the injury done be frankly confessed, and mutual confidence be cultivated by mutual kind action.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VERSE 36. The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

However plainly the truth may be declared, and however important may be the subject, yet, so perverted is the intellect of fallen man, through the depravity of his heart, that he will not regard it. Israel would not regard this kind warning, but transgressed, and fell from their national power and glory, and went into ignominious bondage. And how many sinners, with precious immortal souls, are, at this day, treading under foot the holy Sabbath, walking in vice and irreligion, and thus rushing down to the gates of eternal death, while the gospel is wooing them to salvation and honor and glory.

"And there shalt thou serve other gods." Although this is in the form of a command, it is really a prediction of the judgment that should come upon them for sin. In many instances the subject fixes the definition of the word. For instance, the married pair are said to be one flesh, without any explanation, except what may be gathered from other passages, as Matt. xix. 4, 5, 6, by which we learn that they are one flesh, not as a man's limbs are one flesh, not as all the human family are one flesh, but as a man's family are one flesh by consanguinity and affinity, or relationship; affinity is like consanguinity as to creating oneness.

In like manner work, 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13, is not defined; but a certain clew to its definition is furnished in the Epistle ix. 1. So in Gen. i. 1, the words beginning, heaven and earth, are not defined; but the two latter are defined, verses 8 and 10, and the first is shown by the subject to mean the time of the six days' work.

CHAPTER XXIX.

VERSE 4. Yet hath not the Lord given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

There is so much light given on this subject, so many precepts teaching us, that the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, that a man's goings are of the Lord, that we are in his hand as clay in the hand of the potter, and that, without him, we can do nothing, that all men in Christendom would understand it if their understanding it depended on revelation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VERSE 50. And die in the mount.

Although here again is the form of a command to Moses to die in the mount, it is really a prediction of what the Lord would do; see xxviii. 36; for Moses had not the power of life and death. God would cause him to die there.

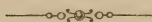
Thus men are seemingly commanded to do what only God can do. Ezek. xviii. 31. If sin is evil and wrong, God's law in disallowing it, and requiring holiness in its stead, is always requiring of fallen men to do that which only is the work of the Holy Spirit. Matt. v. 48.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VERSE 6. Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few.

In conformity with the converse Hebrew *vau*, the negative particle, although not in the original, is by the translators properly supplied before the words *his men* in this verse. See Exod. xxii. 12. 1 Kings ii. 9.

JOSHUA.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 18. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken to thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death.

The people who thus addressed Joshua to encourage him, had a just appreciation of the duties which the people owed to government. He was appointed of God and governed by inspiration of God.

CHAPTER II.

VERSES 8, 9. And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; and she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

The conviction of the truth professed shows how easy it is for men to know the truth when they are willing to know it. It does not appear that she had any other means of knowing it than other citizens. It was no conjecture with her. Others were trembling under the apprehension that it might be true, but she could say, I know. They showed their apprehension of it by the opposition which they were making to hinder it. They only feared that it was true, and perished; she fully relied upon it as true, and was saved. Exod. xviii. 9-12. Josh. ix. 24. John vii. 17. One thief on the cross reviled Jesus, and perished; but the other believed on him and went to Paradise.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 1. But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan * * * and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

The action of one man is here imputed to the whole; and he not a ruler or a representative character, but a private citizen; and by this private citizen the children of Israel, all of them, committed a trespass against the Lord. Let every man say, "Amen; Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." The wicked, rebellious heart of man objects against God—is not reconciled. But the Christian bows in humble adoration. Ps. cvii. 1. Rom. viii. 7. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

What one man did is here imputed to the whole nation, although they were ignorant of it; yet they had to bear the guilt. This is the divine law, however, some may think themselves wiser and better than God; for there is nothing too bad for the wicked. The guilt of Achan's act, and the curse for it, fell upon the nation, for it was done by one of them. It was not done by a Moabite, nor a Philistine, but by an Israelite, by one of the nation, and the curse fell upon the nation. When king David numbered the people, the curse fell upon them, and he was punished in their being diminished, for there his pride could be mortified. When Jonathan tasted the honey contrary to Saul's proclamation, the whole nation (though ignorant of it) was held guilty. Not only did Saul hold Jonathan guilty, but God held him guilty by causing the lot to convict him. And when Dathan and Abiram sinned, their wives, their children and their cattle were all swallowed up together. The whole nation is not destroyed for the sin of one or a few, but they are all held accountable until the guilty individuals are punished.

He that is tolerably acquainted with the divine law, knows the important place which the doctrine of imputation holds in the divine economy. If we could not justly bear the sin of the first Adam, then there could be no salvation by Christ. In man's first sin, utter destruction fell upon the world, for they were all his posterity. So a man's own family have their parents' sins visited upon them.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 22, 23. And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have you beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us? Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

The principles elucidated by this incident are replete with moral instruction. The deception used in getting this treaty did not absolve either party from its obligations. Neither did the treaty release the Gibeonites from punishment for their deception. Therefore, agreeably to the treaty, Joshua let them live, but reduced them and their posterity to perpetual bondage. The jubilee, which released only Hebrews, could bring them no relief. For centuries afterward when king Saul slew some of these Gibeonites, the Lord punished Israel for this injustice, this breach of covenant, by a famine in the reign of David, which shows that several jubilees had afforded them no relief. If slavery be sinful, what better were Joshua and the elders in committing this great sin of sins than the Gibeonites in saving their own lives? The treaty of the Gibeonites was as obligatory on Saul as it had been upon Joshua. Gen. 1. 25. Exod. xiii. 19.

This history of the Gibeonites shows likewise how easy it was for the heathen nations to know the truth that was revealed to Israel and demonstrated by prophecies and miracles; so that the neighboring nations could not be ignorant of it. These Gibeonites knew about God's wonderful works with Israel as well as the Hebrews knew. So did Rahab who concealed the spies. So also the king of Babylon sent ambassadors to Hezekiah (after the shadow on the dial of Ahaz had retrograded ten degrees), to inquire about the wonder done in the land. 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. In like manner we see how the king of Syria believed in the prophets of Israel, by his sending his chief captain to be healed of the leprosy. 2 Kings v. 1. Nebuchadnezzar also became a believer under the prophecy of Daniel. And Herod, the king, when he slew the children of Bethlehem, and when he professed to believe that the good man whom he had slain for Herodias had risen from the dead, and that mighty works were exhibited in him. King Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Felix also

trembled under conviction. And king Pharaoh confessed that the Lord was righteous, and that he and his people were wicked; and he asked Moses to pray for him. The light of Israel must have been strong and clear to have dispelled the darkness of heathenism, and so far converted their kings, chief captains and mighty men.

Balak, also, the king of Moab, was satisfied that Balaam was a true prophet of God, and that the predictions he uttered would certainly come to pass. Num. xxii. 5, 6.

The conversion of Saul, a bitter persecutor, was a greater achievement than that of a king on account of the prejudice occasioned by his indulged persecution; for when some of the priests became believers they did not confess the truth. John xii. 42. They were degraded below devils in the obstinacy of their unbelief, for they did confess him against their own feelings and interest and cause. Mark i. 24.

Then again the Sadducees were confuted and silenced, without confessing or repenting. Their unbelief was so obstinate that they would not confess their convictions which their silence betrayed. Silencing such acute and bitter opponents was evidence in favor of the gospel. But there were then, as now, some who were so unwise as to let their stubborn will overrule the best and clearest evidence. This was the destruction of many at that day as now, who continued to hold and believe what they know to be false, saying, as did the rulers, elders and scribes in council, Acts iv. 16: "What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we can not deny it." It is easier to believe than to disbelieve the inspired word.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 12. Then spake Joshua to the Lord, * * *
sun stand thou still.

Although he commanded the sun to stand still, yet he spake it to the Lord, because spoken in his name. Joshua did not pretend to any power above other men, only as the servant of the Lord. And being the Lord's prophet, what he spake the Lord would bring to pass. He would uphold the honor of his servant for his own sake, and the interests of revelation; for if the prophets should lose their character and influence, the kingdom of God would suffer. Therefore, it is written of

Samuel, that the Lord did let none of his words fall to the ground. 1 Sam. iii. 19.

The prophets had knowledge relating to their prophetic work communicated by the Divine Spirit. But they were as ignorant of the physical sciences as other men. Joshua was guided by the Divine Spirit to speak in those words; because if he had commanded the earth and moon to stand still, which would have been better astronomy, the people would have been bewildered by the strange language, and the miracle would have lost much of its effect in diverting their minds from the miracle to astronomy. Whereas, by his using the language which they understood, the miracle was evident.

There is nothing more strange in this passage than there is in those other passages which speak of the sun running his circuit in the heavens and of his rising and setting. Ps. l. 1; cxlii. 3; xix. 5. Gen. xv. 17; xix. 23. Those who read in their calendars in this enlightened day about the sun's rising and setting, will surely bear with the inspired writers.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 20. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly.

This passage is not selected so much for explanation as to ask the reader to show no respect to scriptures as loving some and caviling at others. It is difficult to conceive how it can be made any more plain. The hardening of wicked men's hearts ought to be as well understood as any other doctrine; for it is as plainly revealed, and often repeated, so that we can have no excuse for dissatisfaction or unbelief. Exod. iv. 21; vii. 3, 13; xiv. 4, 17. Isa. lxiii. 17. John xii. 40. Rom. ix. 13. 2 Thess. ii. 11. Matt. vi. 13.

If any one is not satisfied, let him ask what would satisfy him? Is it not unbelief and hardness of heart that hinder his cordial reception of truth?

All the nations of Canaan thus had their hearts hardened and their minds blinded, except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon, for He hardens whom he will. They were all exceedingly wicked and ungodly, Hivites and all, and they all richly deserved both hardening and destruction as all do; there is no man, woman or child on earth that does not richly

deserve both. If we are dealt with more kindly, more mercifully, it is because our Father is good, not because of any good in us. If he does not both harden and destroy all sinners, nothing but his goodness prevents. He did not so harden the Hivites, but gave them to know as well as Israel knew. And their lives were temporarily saved by it, while their neighbors were all hardened and destroyed. Rahab was another exception, who also was blessed and immortalized for singular faith, which faith was the gift of God, or she would have perished with the rest.

Mary Magdalen and Saul of Tarsus were not elected to mercy because they were better than others, but rather because they were worse, that other poor sinners might be encouraged to come to Christ in hope. So he teaches, 1 Tim. i. 16.

No sinner can properly take encouragement to plunge deeply in sin to advance high in grace; for it is forbidden to do evil that good may come. Besides, the object is accomplished in the salvation of these great sinners, the facts are recorded, so that there is not now so much need of such examples as there was. Any person who should plunge deep in sin as a means of salvation, would do what no one else ever did, nor can do; because he could not think that such is the way to seek salvation. Matt. iv. 7. Rom. iii. 8.

The reason assigned for this hardening of the Canaanites, was that they might sacrilegiously come against God's people and be destroyed. It was enacted of God that Israel should save alive nothing that breathed in the land of Canaan. They would be greatly strengthened to this severe task by those nations coming against them in battle.

As the wrath of man must praise God, and as all things shall work together for good to saints, Rom. viii. 28, so the preservation of the Hivites for bondmen to Israel was overruled for good in building the temple. See 2 Chron. ii. 17, 18.

The wickedness of the patriarchs in selling Joseph was overruled for their benefit, even the preservation of their lives. Gen. xlv. 5-8.

That sinners are not hardened by any direct agency of God is clearly shown by the psalmist: "The wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Ps. lxxvi. 10. Wickedness which could be overruled to the divine glory would not be restrained or prevented; the sinner would be left to his own free agency and free will, which therefore was the hardening and all the hardening that was required. At death all this restraint is removed, and all the malevolence of the lost soul is acted out without restraint, and the soul is entirely hardened, as it would be now if all restraint were removed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 19. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye can not serve the Lord: for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

It is written, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4. Therefore it is manifest that an evil creature can not serve a holy Master. It is an impossibility in the nature of things. If a man of an evil nature and a depraved heart can not live a life that is contrary to his nature, then he can not serve a holy God as the holy angels do. This is taught not only here, but also in other places. "A good man out of the good treasures of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." Matt. xii. 35. This is the law of nature as it is the dictate of common sense. Can fallen angels love and worship God? "How can ye being evil speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart." Matt. xii. 34.

If any men can serve God it is only in so far as they are sanctified in regeneration. For this reason it is written the plowing of the wicked is sin, Prov. xxi. 4. Because it is done with a wicked heart and without faith it must be sin, as is, and must be every word and every act of an unregenerate person. They who are unregenerate are destitute of faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God; whatsoever is not of faith is sin. Rom. xiv. 23. That in the nature of things it can not be otherwise is plainly taught. Matt. vii. 18-21. Gal. v. 17.

Christians do in some degree serve the Lord, but it is far from being entirely or completely. Their imperfections are more than their virtues. Indeed their acts, words and thoughts are all imperfect. A perfectly holy exercise never can proceed from them or be entertained by them, because it is written, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" so filthy are all our works of supposed supererogation.

This is in harmony with the necessity of regeneration, the helplessness of the unregenerate sinner, the dependence of the sinner on divine grace, and the divine sovereignty showing that we are in the sovereign hand of God as clay is in the hand of the potter.

This view of the subject appreciated, will lead us to bow like the publican, and cry "God be merciful to me a sinner." It shows, too, that salvation is of the Lord, and accords with,

"And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. ii. 1.

27. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us.

This is called the figure hyperbole. All the figures of rhetoric are employed by the inspired writers. That great stone had heard nothing, yet it could lie there, and when they looked upon it it could suggest to their remembrance all the solemn events of the day, just as a stone, or a tree, or a stake, can be adopted as a witness or a memorial of a corner to a man's land.

32. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor.

See Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19. Look at Jacob's blessing about this. Shechem is also Sychem and Sychar. Gen. xlviii. 22.

JUDGES.



In reading this book one must be pained at the Hebrews so continually falling away, and relapsing into idolatry. No motive or reason can be shown for their folly and corruption, but every motive and reason was against it; it brought only evil to them, and no good, no pleasure, no satisfaction, yet they would persist in it, as it were, from the love of evil—the gratification of depravity. Men are no better now. Although fashions are different, corruption is the same. Idolatry was the mode of depravity then as heresy is now. Infidelity was the exception then as now. Men sin against their Maker, and against their own good now as then. What are all the various sects to gain by all the heresies which they so obstinately maintain against all the light that shines around them?

That many of the sects must be the advocates of heresy, and even “damnable heresy,” and heresy that will destroy the soul, must be obvious from their being so opposite to each other. Surely they can not all be taught in the Bible. And he that believes contrary to the Bible on essential things will be accursed. Gal. i. 8, 9. Yet they are so infatuated that they take not warning, nor consider the destruction that certainly awaits them. Matt. xxv. 1–12. Prov. xvi. 25; ii. 13, 14, 15. John iii. 20.

It is not for the want of light that men perish, but for despising and rejecting it. Surely revelation is plain enough and full enough. Yet those, the deepest in error, are often the most confident, as Saul was while persecuting. Acts xxvi. 9. They perish with a lie in their right hand, and their eyes shut against the light.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim.

The promises of God were rich and ample. They were an

infinite treasure to them if they had prized them. But, ah! a foolish and wicked people knew not, neither regarded the Lord nor themselves; they made a treaty of peace and friendship with the Hivites, wherein they forfeited all gracious promises of protection and prosperity. He did not utterly reject them, nor cast them off, but chastised them for their violation of duty. And he never will cast off their seed which now have been in rebellion and unbelief these eighteen centuries, and are yet the acknowledged seed of Abraham, and beloved for their father's sake. Rom. xi. 28. They are yet heirs of the great promises.

When a covenant has two parties, and is broken by one party, then it is no longer binding on the other. But the party breaking may be punished for the violation, and the other party may gratuitously continue it.

When a covenant has only one party, it can be performed irrespective of the other party. Such a covenant is that of which the rainbow is a token, and which can never be broken, because the only party to it is immutable. Such is rather an unconditional promise. But promises may be conditional. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Jer. xviii. 7-10.

3. Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

Although the salvation of souls is not for works or obedience, but by grace in Christ, yet obedience is forever a duty, and is the only wise course, and the only safe course, to inherit the blessings of obedience, and to shun the judgments of disobedience. Although salvation is too great a reward for our obedience and can never be purchased by it, yet our obedience will not lose its reward. 2 Tim. ii. 15, 16, 17.

Besides ungodliness is itself a judgment as well as other afflictions which are sent upon the wicked. Rom. i. 28. 2 Thess. ii. 11.

Having disobeyed in sparing, in saving the Hivites, and in sparing so many of the other tribes, contrary to the express command to save alive nothing that breathed, God would not enable them to extirpate the inhabitants of the land. To extirpate the Canaanites was one of the stipulations of the covenant, which being broken, the remaining stipulations could be continued, but only through grace.

10. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers; and there arose another generation

after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

The wonderful works which the Father has done for our nation, and for our world, deeply concern us; and should as deeply interest us to keep alive our wonder and our gratitude. Our remembrance of them should always be lively and impressive. And they must be impressed upon our posterity to succeeding generations to avoid judgments. For the world is responsible for the light given to it. We may not shut our eyes to the light given to preceding generations, or to surrounding nations. 2 Pet. i. 12, 13. Matt. xxviii. 19.

12. And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods.

Here was a consequence which the Lord had told them would follow if they did not extirpate the Canaanites. Had they been thrown in the way of such influence without their fault, they might have been strengthened against it; being exposed to it by their own fault, recklessly and rebelliously, it is no wonder they fell. It would seem impossible, however, that any rational being could fall into such idolatry, and worship gods who can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. It does not seem that any reasons were given, nor any arguments or influence used, to convince or persuade them to such preposterous folly. Neither does it seem that there were any such means used with them, when they asked Aaron to make them gods to go before them. Idolatry, like infidelity and heresy, is independent of reason or judgment.

If idolatry would seem impossible to heathen men, how much more must it seem to the Hebrews, who had the scriptures of Moses, and who had the traditions of their fathers, who had witnessed the miracles of Moses and Joshua.

Without wanton and gratuitous absurdity, they could not go into idolatry. They knew that an idol was nothing. But they loved darkness rather than light, error rather than truth, and folly rather than wisdom. And such is fallen man in all ages; so that the light from heaven that shines around them can not make them wise.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 5. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth.

It was not possible for them to lap water with their tongues as dogs do; but they could and did imitate it by using their hands to convey the water to their mouths, as a dog uses his tongue. That this is the true meaning of this passage is clear from the explanation given in the next verse, which removes all difficulty and makes it all plain.

We may make this passage useful, by letting it teach us, that revelation can make some things perfectly plain and obvious, while couched in language which has another meaning. Of this, revelation has many examples. He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. He that believeth on me, believeth not on me. The maid is not dead, but sleepeth. Behold, three men stood by him. The Lord is a man of war. I have made thee a god to Pharaoh. There was not a man to till the ground.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 24. And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that you would give me every man the earrings of his prey.

Like many men's desires, this became a snare to Gideon and to others. Much better had it been for him to have remained poor, and not had this gold. Verse 27; and chapter xvii. 2, 4.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 6. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king.

This was a schismatical transaction, and was never ratified

by the nation. Being stained with fratricide, it was put down by a divine judgment pronounced by Jotham.

This was the first king that reigned in Israel, if we except Melchizedek and Moses. Gen. xiv. 18. Deut. xxxiii. 5. But like Melchizedek, Abimelech only reigned over a part of Palestine, and Moses was called Judge. But he reigned as king, but royalty was not hereditary in his family.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 13. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.

The apparent discrepancy of this passage with the subsequent deliverances vouchsafed to Israel is not alone in the scriptures. They are to be found in other parts. Jonah iii. 4, 10.

As such apparent discrepancies were numerous, the Lord provided a general exposition for all of them, that whosoever will may read and receive the light, and that whosoever prefers darkness to light may have his choice.

In this general explanation the Lord says that a condition is always to be understood. See Jer. xviii. 7-10. 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. 1 Kings vi. 12. God would deliver Israel no more, except they should repent and return to the worship of God. This general exposition of all seemingly unfulfilled promises and threatenings is given for our instruction, that we may know that the scriptures are of divine authority.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 7. And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house?

The elders of Gilead neither denied the accusation nor attempted to palliate it; for a soft answer turneth away wrath; and is more prevalent than contradiction. And some of these elders may have been his brethren who had expelled him. They appealed only to his generosity. And they prevailed.

In the scriptures a constructive relation is often given to

different things by metonymy. David did what the children of Ammon did. 2 Sam. xii. 9. The Lord did what Satan did. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 1 Chron. xxi. 1. The thieves on the cross are said to have done what only one of them did. It was done on their part, a part being often put for the whole. The whole people of Israel were charged with the guilt of what one man did; they are said to have stolen and dissembled, to be cursed, and all for what one man had done. But it is explained so that we understand it. We had incurred death in the first Adam, and endured it in the second Adam. Rom. v. 12. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Rom. vi. 6-8.

31. Then it shall be, that whosoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

When men make rash promises, and speak unadvisedly with their lips, they involve themselves in great and needless perplexities. It was rash presumption in Jephthah to make this vow; for it might be his dog, an unclean animal, that was prohibited, or it might be his wife or his daughter that would first meet him; therefore he vowed to do what, in all probability, would be unlawful; the divine law did not admit of human sacrifices at man's option. He was not only reckless enough to make it, but also reckless enough to persevere also to its performance. Half Hebrew, being the son of a strange woman, he led an evil life as a freebooter, verse 3, and an exile from Israel. His moral principles being so perverted, his conduct would naturally be like his principles, and thus is his erroneous conduct accounted for.

39. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed.

Such had long been the erratic course of Israel that their light had become dim, and their divine ordinances had become low and perverted, so that Jephthah, like king Saul, seems to have been his own priest on this occasion. If they had been favored with a pious, active and intelligent priesthood, Jephthah might have been shown the error, cruelty and impiety of this conduct. Being elated with prosperity and pharisaic pride, he rushed blindly forward into a great abomination to win high honor for piety, and performed the awful and cruel deed which his unlawful vow required, glorying in his shame. Isa. lxvi. 3. Phil. iii. 19.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 23. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

Ungodly men like Jephthah, and those Philistines intoxicated with success, think themselves the favorites of heaven, and show their impiety by an unauthorized interpretation of Providence. Success often attends the wicked, as when Cain slew his brother; when the Philistines slew and vanquished king Saul and Israel; when the Jews slew the Lord, and the martyr Stephen. They know not the counsels of the Lord, but were wise in their own conceit and increased unto more ungodliness. They could exclaim, "What great things Dagon our god hath done for us," when they knew not what they said, but ascribed to Dagon the works of Jehovah, whose secret counsels were above their comprehension.

I. SAMUEL.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.

The compound name Ramathaim-zophim is, in both parts of it, put in the plural number by the letters "im," which is the mode of making the plural in Hebrew; whereas in about one-third of the instances in which the Hebrew plural is made in our version, an "s" is also added, and without any authority or reason, and only confusing a plain subject. *Exod. xxv. 18-22.* Any carelessness about the word of God is irreverent. When dealing with it we should put off our shoes from our feet; for we are on holy ground. Nothing but truth, propriety and solemnity should be indulged.

The term Ephrathite does not refer to Elkanah's lineage, but the district of country he inhabited, for both he and his son Samuel were Levites, descendants of Kohath.

2. And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Good men in some instances, in those early times, indulged in bigamy; for if it was not expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, it was by the law of nature; for God made only one wife for Adam which revealed his will as the law of nature. And he is continually expressing the same law in providence in the near equality of male and female births. All men can not have more than one wife, for they are not numerous enough. The vexation attendant upon the violation of this law, is shown in *Lev. xviii. 18*, which prohibits bigamy and not incest, nor adultery, for they are both prohibited in other places, as verses 16 and 17. Even Solomon was not exempt from affliction and temptation from outlandish women. See also *Malachi ii. 14, 15, 16.*

6. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret.

Instead of promoting love and peace as a good woman would, Peninnah endeavored to render Hannah her sister-wife unhappy; while, on the other hand, Hannah seems only to have been excited to tears and prayer. So conducting and refraining from passion and reviling, she secured the love of her husband and the gracious favor of God, who loves and pities his sorrowful children, and who kindly raised her from the childless condition for which she was reproached.

28. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.

I. e., dedicated to the Lord.

There is obscurity in the last clause of this verse, respecting the antecedent to the pronoun *he*. There is nothing in the context by which it can be referred to either Elkanah or Samuel, Hannah being the subject of discourse. If the pronoun had been *she*—she worshiped the Lord—then all had been natural and plain.

It was not Samuel showing indications of early piety, as Dr. Scott imagines; because chapter iii. 7 informs us that Samuel did not yet know the Lord. And the following verse speaks of Hannah as worshiping the Lord. If any manuscripts had the feminine pronoun, it would be easy to conclude that they had the true reading. But such manuscripts seem not to have been met with.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 3. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth.

The latter of these two clauses is in the affirmative in the original. But the translators, by the subject alone, have properly rendered it in the negative, the converse *van* being understood.

17. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

It is the imperious duty of all to conduct divine worship, and every thing pertaining to it, with gravity, reverence

and awe, lest the incongruity between the thing and the mode of performing it, should excite the disgust of the congregation and thus injure the cause of religion, and bring down the wrath of God upon the profane. Ps. c. 4.

25. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding, they hearkened not to the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

God did not give them grace by shedding down his Holy Spirit upon them to open their ears to the instruction of their father, that they might turn to God by repentance and seek salvation by grace. Ezek. xviii. 21. He did not open their hearts as he did the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14, for he hath mercy on whom he will. Their sins cried for judgment. They profaned the altars and the tabernacles of the Lord, so that the Lord would slay them, and would not pardon. Thus it appears that they were forsaken of God, given up, left to perish in their sins, reprobated.

This is in accordance with the doctrine declared by Solomon, respecting those associated with bad women: "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again; neither take they hold of the paths of life." Prov. ii. 18, 19. Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before unto judgment, and some they follow after. There are some classes or kinds of sinners of whom there is no hope that they will ever turn to God and embrace the gospel. 2 Thess. ii. 11. Rom. x. 21. Heb. x. 26. Rom. xi. 7, 8. Prov. xxix. 1. Matt. xii. 31, 32.

30. Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

It is not uncommon for narratives and parts of narratives to be recorded in one place, and their explanation to be recorded in another place. The creation of man is recorded, Gen. i. 27, and further explanation is recorded, ii. 7, 21, 22. The Ninivites were informed by Jonah, that in forty days Nineveh should be overthrown, and two hundred and fifty years afterward he revealed by Jeremiah that all such prophecies were conditional. Jer. xviii. 7-10.

Many prophecies are intended not to be fully understood until their fulfillment. John xvi. 12; xii. 16. These scriptures show that, although a promise or a threatening has no condition annexed to it, yet it is to be taken as conditional. Isa. xxxviii. 1-5.

It would be cumbersome to be loading up all the precepts of revelation with explanations, limitations and conditions; it is sufficient that they be in the divine code in the place assigned to each. If God would not perform his promise to Eli's house, then two things are involved by the fact, that the promise was conditional, and that Eli's house had not performed the condition, verses 15, 17, or would be cast off.

There are however covenants and promises that are without conditions. Such is the promise not to destroy the earth again by a flood. Gen. viii. 21, 22. Such was the covenant with David and his posterity. 2 Sam. vii. 15. Such is the promise of the Millennium; such also is the promise to evangelize the Gentiles, and the return of Israel. Gen. xii. 3. Isa. xi. 10; xlii. 6.

There are covenants that are absolute, because their conditions are already fulfilled, and because the parties are infallible. Such is the covenant of redemption by the death of Christ, for the condition on his part is already fulfilled, and therefore it is certain on the Father's, and on the part of the Holy Spirit. They who are to be saved are bought with a price. 1 Cor. vi. 20. And the price being already paid on the cross, the salvation of those who are bought, becomes certain and inevitable to the parties to that covenant, viz: the Trinity. The sinner is not a party to that covenant. He has a deep interest in its stipulations. But it is in other hands than his. While salvation remains an uncertainty to sinners it is certain to the Godhead. For as their salvation is not of works, but of grace, and solely of the merit of Christ's work that they are saved, and that is already performed, the salvation for whom he died becomes a certainty.

This is evident from the fact that they are given to Christ as his by a covenant to which only the immutable persons of the Trinity are parties, and which is well ordered in all things and sure. Although the acceptance of this salvation on the part of the elect, their coming to Christ by repentance and faith, are made known to sinners in the preaching of the gospel as necessary to the salvation of any sinner; yet they are expressly informed that this faith is not of themselves, but is the gift of God. Eph. ii. 4-10.

Their coming to Christ is not left to the accident of their choice, for Jesus again said: "All that the Father giveth me

shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." They will all come without a single failure, for it is not left to their precarious will, because then it would certainly fail, and the whole scheme of salvation would be void.

Their coming to Christ is one of the divine stipulations in the covenant of redemption, without which it would have been a failure. It is written of those given to Christ in this covenant, that the Father said to the Son, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ps. cx. 3.

It is true that, if the elect after being given to Christ do not repent and believe, they could not be saved. And it is equally true that, if it were left with them, no one of them would ever come. But the covenant is well ordered in all things and sure, being guarded with provisions against this possibility.

Besides this willingly coming and acceptance on their part is an essential provision of the salvation itself, without it it had been no salvation. So the Savior taught: "No man can come unto me except it were given unto him of my Father; for without me, ye can do nothing." This coming to Jesus and believing in him is a great and a mighty work of Omnipotence, being the exertion of that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead. Eph. i. 19, 20. If any frail mortal should think that he can renew himself to faith, can exercise this same mighty power which raised Christ from the dead, he would furnish a striking illustration of 1 Cor. ii. 14.

It is wisely provided that the elect never pervert their election to arrogance nor licentiousness, for their sanctification must proceed far before they can exercise a well-grounded hope of salvation—have a strong assurance of hope. And their faith does not become strong until their sanctification has so far advanced as to give stability to their piety.

If some professors seem to be exceptions, for I acknowledge there are many that so seem, the explanation is furnished by the stony-ground hearers in the parable, whose early joy proceeded from the fact that they had not root, but presently fell away and yielded no fruit.

Another provision in this covenant, so well ordered, is the provision to keep the elect by the power of God through faith unto salvation. 1 Pet. i. 5.

As the Lord has bought them, he has a right to them and to their salvation. But they have no right to it in themselves, nor on their own account. If they were all left to perish, they would have no cause to complain, for they have not bought nor redeemed themselves. Christ who bought them would have cause to complain, not they.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 13. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

To judge Eli's house forever, was to inflict upon his family divine judgments as long as his descendants should be recognized. This judgment was signally displayed more than three hundred years afterward in the destruction of the priests. Chap. xxii. 16, 19.

Parents have a kind of kingly authority in their own house, having all power but that of capital punishment, which was put under municipal authority. Deut. xxi. 20, 21. Every head of a family was responsible for good order in his family, as the civil ruler was for good order in the state. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son," Prov. xiii. 24; and children are commanded to obey their parents. Exod. xx. 12. Eph. vi. 1.

This sin which entailed perpetual judgments upon Eli's house, was not originally his sin, but the sin of his sons, and became his by his suffering it. The sin was enormous beyond all forbearance. He should have removed these wicked men from the priestly office and from the house of God. And then the ark had not been taken, nor Israel vanquished, nor Eli, Hophni and Phineas and his wife died in a day.

14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

Such great wickedness, standing where it ought not by its enormity, partakes of the nature of the unpardonable sin. Mark iii. 29; xiii. 14.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 8. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

The clearness of apprehension evinced by the inhabitants of Jericho, in so closely shutting up their city, Josh. vi. 1; the

clear understanding of Rahab and of the Gibeonites, Josh. ii. 9, 10; ix. 3, 9; and here evinced by the Philistines, show us how easily divine truth may be known even by Gentile nations. Their continued impiety is not from the want of light, but from the hatred of it. They know God but do not glorify him as God. Rom. i. 21. They would know and receive the truth if they had a heart for it.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 19. And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and three-score and ten men.

It was irreverent and sacrilegious for them to look into the ark, or to touch it. Num. iv. 20. Uzzah died for touching it. 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. The duty of the men was to call for priests to take down the ark, while they reverently stood back. Num. iv. 20. What is here rendered fifty thousand and seventy, is believed to mean 1170, or "70 men, fifties and a thousand." Such a mistake may have occurred in translating numerical letters.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 9. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

The Lord was displeased with their folly in asking for a king, for it virtually was a rejection of him as their ruler. Verse 7. It is remarkable that though their request was evil, and displeasing to God, yet in the greatness of his forbearance and condescension to their weakness he granted it. Men are free agents, they were created such, and are dealt with as such. Which explains Lot's being indulged in his error of taking residence in Zoar, rather than fleeing to the mountain which was better. Both wicked and good men are permitted every day to do what is displeasing to God, as Adam was in eating the forbidden fruit. It is written, "God has no pleasure in

the death of the wicked; but rather would have pleasure in his turning, repenting and living." We can then understand Matt. xix. 8.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 9. And it was so, that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart.

To suppose that Saul's heart was changed, so as to become what is called a new heart, is to interpret it without authority. A new heart is never expressed in such language, and the continued wickedness of his life forbids such an interpretation. And death by suicide also forbids it, for it is written: "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

It is true that the phrase has to be interpreted. But we are not all at liberty to interpret it falsely to gratify a sectarian spirit. It is obvious that an inexperienced young man like Saul, and so timid as to hide himself among the stuff on the day of his election, would need a stouter heart to ascend a throne and wield a scepter, to feel and act like a king.

Saul's other heart was shown when he heard the cruel requirement of Nahash of the men of Jabash-Gilead to have their right eyes put out, when his soul fired with indignation, and the Spirit of God coming upon him, hewed in pieces a yoke of oxen, and sent the pieces as a proclamation throughout all the coasts of Israel. Chap. ix. 7. If this were what the Spirit of God did in him, it shows what his other heart was.

When the men of Gibeah heard of this cruel requirement of Nahash, they lifted their voices and wept; but Saul's other heart roused his patriotism and his valor to defend his people. This other heart then was not sanctification, but courage and chivalry in the cause of his country.

A change of heart is not always for the better. Ezek. xxviii. 2. Exod. iv. 21.

10. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

To suppose that this infers sanctification in Saul is without any warrant. Abimelech, king of Gerar, had a revelation from God in a dream respecting Sarah, Gen. xx. 3; but this was no evidence of his piety. Laban also had a revelation from God

without piety, for he had this revelation while he was hunting lost idols. Gen. xxxi. 24. Balaam was an accredited prophet of God, and a true prophet, while he was a wicked man. 2 Pet. ii. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 8. King Saul likewise prophesied when an evil spirit from God came upon him. 1 Sam. xviii. 10.

Prophesying is not evidence of piety, for Caiaphas the high priest prophesied while persecuting the Lord. John xi. 51.

26. And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

Here, too, is an instance of the work of the Spirit, where there is no sanctification, and which refers only to municipal economy—to civil affairs.

It was important for Saul to have a retinue above a common citizen. God had touched their hearts to this object.

For constructing the tabernacle, it is said that God had filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; and that he had put wisdom in the hearts of all those who were wise-hearted. Exod. xxxi. 2, 6. This work of the Spirit of God was to endow them with mechanical skill, and does not infer piety or sanctification. Its object sometimes is to trouble and afflict. Chap. xviii. 10.

27. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us?

There was no probability in their view that this man could be of any use to them in their low and fallen state to raise them out of it. They were carnal and wicked men—sons of Belial—and had not faith in him who had chosen Saul to be their king, and who could make him their deliverer.

What seems improbable to men can turn out contrary to appearances and to men's expectations, for the express purpose of showing that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; that they may learn to pray and have faith in him. Ezek. xxxvii. 3. "Son of man, can these bones live? O Lord; thou knowest."

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 20. And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to battle: and, behold every man's sword was against his fellow.

In interpretation of scripture, it is an important rule to let the subject fix the definition and limitation of terms. Every man's sword must be applied and limited to the army of the enemy. Without this limitation it would apply to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, and to Saul and his 600 men that were with him. So necessary and so useful is this rule, that some repetition should be indulged in these comments.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel.

See Exod. xvii. 8, 14, 16. The Lord is so mindful of his people that he never forgets the cruelties shown them, nor the injuries done them. Besides, the injuries done them he takes as if done to himself. Matt. xxv. 40, 44.

And when those who have suffered those injuries and forgotten them, and although many years have elapsed, they or their posterity are held to their account for those injuries. In this instance many hundred years had elapsed before these descendants of Amalek were thus destroyed, showing that with the righteous Sovereign, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

Ministers also may learn from the error of Saul that they must preach what God has spoken in his word, and let that be their pleasure. And they may not decline from it, Jonah i. 3; nor vary from it to please themselves as Saul. xv. 11.

11. It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king.

When the Lord is spoken of as repenting, the repentance is contemplated as referring both to the state of mind, and to the course of conduct induced by that state of mind. Although the infinite Jehovah never has that state of mind which infers regret, that is an essential part of the sinner's repentance, yet he has that abhorrence of evil which is common to all holy beings.

But that part of repentance which relates to conduct, the Lord does have; for he changes conduct as he eternally intended to do, when a change of circumstances should require it. When king Saul was placed on the throne of Israel, a good spirit was given him; not to effect any sanctification in him, but to give him placidity of mind. But the king did evil; the Lord repented, took away that placid spirit, and sent an evil spirit to trouble him. xvi. 14. Thus the Lord manifested his repentance. He also further manifested it by anointing David king in place of Saul. xvi. 1.

29. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

The Lord does not repent in any sense that implies a change in him, nor in any sense of regret for what he has done; for all that he does is done in infinite goodness and infinite wisdom; and all that he promises or covenant he will perform, except where there are conditions either expressed or implied. Chap. ii. 30, 31-34; iii. 13.

Whether repent is here the best word which the translators could have found for this place, I do not say. The passage means that God never changes his thoughts or purposes, that with him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

He only blessed Saul until he rebelled against his command to destroy Amalek, and then changed his administration as the case required, and as a perfect and a holy Sovereign would do; so that this change of administration is a perfection in him; for a good sovereign must make that change or modification which good government requires.

That this is all that is meant by God's repenting, is made entirely evident by its being applied to his repenting of the good which he had promised to his people, and omitting to perform it. Jer. xviii. 10. In what other sense can it be said that he repents of good promised. There is nothing to regret in having spoken good, or promising it, but there may be wise and good reasons for not bestowing it when the conditions implied or understood, are wanting, and the want of them renders the bestowment of the promised good unsuitable.

Such changes in the divine administration which are made in time, were always present. He always knew what changes in the conduct of creatures would require correspondent changes in his administration; there is no change of mind or purpose with him; no, nor shadow of turning, such repentance being the perfection of his character.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 1. And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

The piety of Samuel is prominent in this reproof. Samuel loved Saul, pitied him and mourned for him. If God inflict righteous judgment upon transgressors, it becomes us here "to weep with those that weep." As the Sovereign hath mercy on whom he will, and hardeneth whom he will, so also he exerciseth his sovereignty in temporal things. He raiseth one to the throne and continues him there, or his heir, or removes him and supplants his heir. He raises and blesses whom he will, and casts down and afflicts, and sends to destruction whom he will, and all in perfect justice and righteousness, for we all richly deserve everlasting destruction. If any fare better to-day, if their everlasting death be delayed at the present, it is infinite mercy.

Such is the doctrine of the Bible, and the doctrine results naturally from the divine sovereignty. Man's seeking has no necessary connection with it. But it is evident that it originates only with him, even when seeking may take place, and may seem to act an important part in success; yet that also is as much from God and his grace as the success is. Eph. ii. 8, 10. When he will he employs means to accomplish events, and at other times accomplishes them without means. ii. 35.

Saul had no thought of being raised to the throne, nor sought it, yet Samuel anointed him to it. Neither did David until the prophet anointed him: Neither did Jeroboam until Ahijah told him. 1 Kings xi. 31. Neither had the twelve apostles any thought of the apostolic office until they were called to it. Saul of Tarsus had not sought it, and yet God met him on the way to Damascus, in the midst of his wicked career, to make him an apostle, and turned him from his unbelief. In conformity with all these instances and with the doctrine of divine sovereignty, it is written: "I was found of them that sought me not." Rom. x. 20. The lost world did not seek for a Savior before God provided one. When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Rom. v. 6. The ungodly world did not ask for a Savior. It is written:

• "God so loved the world as to provide one." John iii. 16.
1 John iv. 9, 10.

Divine revelation on this and on every other subject on which it treats, is in beautiful consistency. How plainly does the divine sovereignty appear in those events. God knew that Saul would act out the wickedness of his carnal heart, if he did not give him a better heart. And he did not give him that better heart, because he had great reasons for not doing it, to show his righteous judgments. And he accordingly provided a successor to the throne in the family of Jesse. Thus it both exemplifies and proves the doctrine of election and reprobation, for it is one doctrine. Both are equally true as counter to each other. There could be no election if there were no non-election; if some were not elected none could be reprobated (which is only not elected). If there were no elect angels there could be no reprobate angels. If all the angels were holy, and heirs to eternal glory, there would be none elected to that glory, and none reprobated or non-elected. If all the angels were holy and all heirs to eternal bliss, we could not call it election. We could say that they were all favored with eternal glory and bliss, but we could not think of calling it election or choosing.

If God elected David to the throne of Israel, he repudiated Jonathan and all of Saul's house, and not for Jonathan's fault, but for Saul's.

When Saul was elected to the throne, all others, by that act were reprobated—nothing done to them—they were just left where they were. Something was done to him who was elected, but nothing was done to all the other Hebrews who were not elected. Reprobation, therefore, means, let alone, left where they were.

Regeneration also infers reprobation. If all were not regenerated and saved, then it must follow that those who are regenerated are first elected to be the subjects of that grace. And if it be of election of grace, then it is not of works. Thus the doctrines of revelation beautifully harmonize. Eph. ii. 8-10. Rom. iv. 1-7; xi. 4-8. It is of grace that the ungodly are justified.

7. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as a man seeth.

The Lord out of four millions of people, elected one man to be king in Israel, and here this eldest son of David is re-

fused by the same infinite Sovereign who is without respect of persons. From these things it must be obvious that the doctrine of election is entirely consistent with God's not being a respecter of persons. The appointment of a king for a nation is governed by other considerations than mere favor to the individual.

So the election of a lost sinner to salvation can not be for any good works, for he has none before regeneration. But the election of a sinner to salvation is for some wise and good purpose that God means to accomplish thereby. This reason is given us in Paul's case, and is declared to have been to furnish a striking example of the freeness of grace, for an encouragement to sinners to come to Christ for salvation. 1 Tim. i. 16.

Having mercy upon one sinner and not upon another, hearing the prayer of one and not hearing that of another, giving one infant but few years in life and preserving another to a hundred years, giving one a feeble intellect or a feeble body, and to another a different intellect or a different constitution of body, are not instances of respect to persons, for God does them constantly without respecting persons, because he does not do them out of any partiality, or personal respect to them such as men are capable of; but he does all things from reasons of state, from great and good and glorious purposes. Gen. i v. 4, 5. Exod. ii. 25. Lev. xxvi. 7, 8, 9; xxv. 44. Deut. xxviii. 6, 7, 8. 2 Kings xiii. 23. Ps. lxxxix. 20-37; cxlvii. 20. Rom. ix. 18-19. 2 Kings xix. 20-22.

14. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.

We should show a narrow mind if we should suppose that Saul must have been a pious man, because the Spirit of the Lord was with him; or if we should suppose that he was fallen from grace because the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. Jehovah for wise and good purposes of his own had raised him to the throne of Israel; and for the same wise and good purposes had given him such influences of the Spirit as were suitable to qualify him for his high office, by giving him another heart, the heart of a king, the spirit of a ruler, and had bowed the hearts of the nation to submit to him as their ruler, and God had sent his good Spirit to strengthen and encourage him in his government. But Saul was a carnal man, a natural man. That he was a sinner and had an unrenewed and an unsanctified heart was shown by his sacrilegiously invading the sacerdotal office, and offering sacrifice with profane hands, chap. xiii. 12, 13, while he knew that the priests were set apart exclusively to that sacred office, and that any other person

coming nigh was to be put to death. Num. xviii. 7. He knew that by that act he forfeited his life. If he had been a pious man he would have feared God who had committed the holy office to the family of Aaron. It is written of the pious, "But to this man will I look, even to him who is of a poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. lxvi. 2. And Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." If Saul showed contempt for the divine law, and would not walk in it in high and fundamental points, he was forsaken of God, and cast off to perish like Judas, by his own hand; then he was not a pious man; for it is written, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. vii. 20. Ps. lxxviii. 49.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 26. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

The piety of David appears in his regard for God, for the honor of his cause and people, for God is dishonored when his cause and his people are dishonored; unless it be in their chastisement for disobedience. Moses showed the same piety, Exod. xxxii. 10-13; and Joshua showed the same piety when he said, "And what shalt thou do unto thy great name?" Josh. vii. 9. How different was the spirit of Saul and Israel when they endured this defiance for forty days, and did not rise to vindicate the honor of God and his cause.

It plainly appears that God was using means to introduce David to Israel, and to prepare the way for his ascending the throne of Israel to which the Lord had sent Samuel to anoint him. God always can, and almost always does employ means to secure the accomplishment of his counsels, for he says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa. xlvi. 10. David was a prophet, and the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, strengthening him, when he went against Goliath.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 10. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house.

Evil spirits can do nothing only when God allows them to do such evils as he will overrule to accomplish some good object. Job i. 12; ii. 6. 1 Kings xxii. 23. Ps. lxxvi. 10. Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.

If Saul prophesied under an evil spirit, we learn how all his seeming religious exercises originated; and he was an unconverted man, an assassin in heart as he attempted the life of one who had done him and his kingdom greater service than any other man, and who had given him no offense. Such a religion as Saul had was like that of other wicked men. By his fruits we know him.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 10. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with his javelin.

It might be good logic to suppose that an athletic man like Saul, with a trusty weapon in his hand, could effectively smite an unarmed stripling in his presence who was intent upon his harp. But however plausible such reasoning might be, it would be bad theology. Thus reason leads man astray. Eve reasoned herself into the belief that it would be useful to eat of the prohibited fruit. Paul verily thought he ought to oppose the gospel. The patriarchs believed they could get clear of any further annoyance from Joseph by selling him into Egypt. But their reason was false, because not agreeable to theology, for he was thus put in a condition to do them more evil if he were disposed to do so.

But Saul could not destroy David, for God had anointed him king of Israel, and therefore he would live to reign. God has said, "My counsel shall stand;" and there is no device nor counsel that can succeed against the Lord. There was not natural ability in all the whole world of men and angels to defeat the counsels of God, and to prevent David's living to reign. Pilate, in good logic and in seemingly good reason, might say to his Lord, his Creator, "Knowest thou not that I

have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" And the Lord could answer, in sounder theology, "Thou couldst have had no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." To the same purpose he said, "I lay down my life of myself: no man taketh it from me." John x. 18.

Saul was determined to slay David; and being king it would seem that he had power to do it. Chap. xx. 31; xix. 10, 11. And though he sought David every day with an army of 3000 men at his back, he could effect nothing but his own disappointment. The Lord delivered him not into his hand. Chap. xxiii. 14.

When Saul's messengers, sent to take him, came where he was, they lay all night upon the ground, prophesying, and returned without him. Chap. xix. 20. And when David voluntarily ventured into Saul's presence, Saul was abashed and as harmless as a lamb. Chap. xxiv. 1-22.

As Divine Providence rules all things, no creature can boast of his natural ability to think or to do anything. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13. John xv. 5. Lam. iii. 37.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 16. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

Jonathan perceived clear indications of Providence that David would ascend the throne after Saul his father; and therefore made this covenant with David for his own safety and the safety of his family, under the imprecation that David's enemies should execute upon David due judgment if David should violate it. If David, when occupying the throne, should cut off Jonathan or his posterity, as was too common with wicked rulers at that day, as they being cut off could not be avengers of the breach of the covenant, he said: "The Lord require it at the hands of David's enemies;" *i. e.*, the warring nations with whom he was surrounded.

Beasts were then sometimes the executioners of divine judgments upon the wicked, and may be so now. Gen. ix. 5. 1 Kings xiii. 24; xx. 36. 2 Kings xvii. 25.

David as a pious man kept this covenant. 2 Sam. ix. 7.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 11. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?

By this passage we learn that impossible cases may be supposed and reasoned upon. Although David would retreat from Keilah, by which Saul would be prevented from coming there, yet this did not hinder the propriety of the Lord's telling him what would be the consequence of his remaining in Keilah. David understood the prophecy. He understood that if he remained there Saul would come down, and the men of Keilah would deliver him to Saul. A change in the premises must infer a corresponding change in conclusions. John viii. 24, 31, 32. Gal. v. 21.

The Lord knows what would result from any supposed case, or under any supposed conditions of circumstances, although they are never to be realized. Ezek. xiv. 14. Josh. ii. 12-21. Deut. xi. 8, 9, 13-21. Matt. xxiv. 24. Prov. i. 28; xiv. 6. Luke xiii. 24.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 31. That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offense of heart unto my Lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my Lord hath avenged himself.

When it is borne in mind that Abigail's object in meeting David was to prevent David from destroying her husband Nabal, it must be perceived that the translation does not do justice to her argument; for, as it stands in our version, she encourages him to proceed in that destruction by assuring him that he will never grieve over the recollection of it. Instead of encouraging him to accomplishing it, she is evidently dissuading him from it by suggesting to him that if he did not do it, that, in the days of his future prosperity he would never grieve over its commission, he would not have it to regret. He yielded to her persuasion and returned home without executing his purpose. His conduct is a comment upon the direction of her persuasive argument.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VERSE 14. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel.

It is difficult to perceive the reasonableness of the power of this woman to raise Samuel, or any one personating him. But the fact seems to be settled by the pen of inspiration, that Saul perceived that it was Samuel. Exod. vii. 11, 22; viii. 7. Job i. 12, 16, 19. Rev. xiii. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 16.

CHAPTER XXIX.

VERSE 8. And David said unto Achish, But what have I done * * * that I may not go fight against the enemies of my Lord?

Again we must feel some perplexity in conceiving how David could purpose to fight against Saul who was the Lord's anointed, and against Israel the Lord's people. But as this point is not explained, we must leave it as we find the fact to be. But David did not fight against Saul nor against Israel. As his conduct in consenting to the expedition seems to have been wrong, for he erred as all men do, it was a gracious kindness in Providence that he was sent back and saved from the expedition. 1 Pet. i. 5. Rev. iii. 10.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VERSE 4. Then said Saul unto his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

The armor-bearer was right in disobeying Saul. But he was not right in killing himself. No condition, no unfavor-

able circumstances can justify suicide, nor killing another from mere trouble. However gloomy a man's prospects may be, he must fear God, trust in him and regard his law. God can turn darkness into light. Job longed for death in his severe trials, but his piety forbade the thought of suicide. He feared and obeyed God, trusted in him. And his darkness was soon turned to light: he soon received the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

This account of Saul's death is not inconsistent with that which the Amalekite gave to David, 2 Sam. i. 10; for after Saul had fallen upon his sword and received a mortal wound, he might live several hours exposed to the insults of his enemies.

II. SAMUEL.

How much Saul lost by persecuting and casting off David, his best friend and his best soldier. Had he been as faithful to David as David was to him, he might not have been in this subjection to his enemies. So if he had obeyed God, etc.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 35. And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or aught else, till the sun be down.

It is not fasting if anything of the nature of food or drink be enjoyed, or if our children or domestics are engaged in our employ; or if we engage in any enjoyment, amusement or recreation, wit or humor, or business.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 2. That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

The king of Israel dwelt in a magnificent palace, but the King of kings had no palace in Israel, but the emblem of his presence, the ark, was in a tent of curtains. And David's pious soul was grieved. He was ashamed to be honored herein more than God.

15. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

Here is a covenant with David and Solomon, that in no emergency would divine favor depart from them as it had from Saul. There was no such covenant with Saul. The Father has a covenant with the Son which secures favor and everlasting life to those who were given him. As Saul was not in this covenant, his temporal prosperity had no security. He had prosperity for a season, as the stony-ground hearers, and as some wicked men flourish like the green bay-tree, for a season, and it ought to have led him to humility, gratitude and repentance. But they were all withdrawn for his sin; even the cheering and sustaining influence of the Spirit was withdrawn, so that he fell into dejection and despondency. 1 Sam. xviii. 10; xix. 9; xv. 11; xvi. 14.

The Lord did for David and Solomon what he did not do for Saul, and yet there was no respect of persons in his doing so, for he did not do it from respect to their persons, but from respect to his own glory. He put a difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel for the same reason, without showing respect to persons. He makes a difference as to the age, health and lives of persons. But it is for higher objects than respect for persons. Making a difference is not respecting persons. Rom. ix. 11-18. Lev. xix. 15. Num. xvi. 15. Deut. i. 17. 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

Although this covenant seems to relate to temporal things, yet, since God is unchangeable, it must prove the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints; for divine attributes are as much involved in eternal as in temporal things.

It also confutes the carnal objection to perseverance, "That it leads to licentiousness, or looseness in morals," for the Lord here covenanted that he would not take away his mercy from David and his house, as he did from Saul and his house; for pious Jonathan suffered with his father.

27. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house.

The word house is used by the Lord in a very different way from that in which David used it in his overture to Nathan. vii. 2. By house the Lord intended David's family, children, posterity. And it shows that the scriptures are rich in figurative language, or suggests the subject. Matt. xxvi. 26 is not singular.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 8. And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom.

Here the word house is used differently, and seems not to relate so much to his children as to other family relations.

As Saul and his sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, were dead, all their possessions fell into the hands of David after the death of Abner and Ishbosheth. All their widows might be taken by the succeeding monarch. What claims our attention is, that all these widows were called wives, as if their husbands were living. This was the universal custom with the inspired writers, that whenever the person or name of the former husband was mentioned, the word wife is used instead of widow, which only is used when the former husband is not alluded to, and which was therefore necessary to show her state. See Gen. xxxviii. 8, 9. Deut. xxv. 5, 7, 9. Judges xx. 4. Ruth iv. 5, 10. 1 Sam. iv. 19; xxvii. 3; xxx. 5. 2 Sam. xi. 26; xii. 9, 10. Matt. xxii. 24, 25. Acts v. 7. This rule is necessary to counteract the misconstruction which some are disposed to put upon Lev. xviii. 16, and to preserve the truth.

14. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

Besides the judgments entailed upon David's family or house for his sin in this matter, verses 10, 11, the child that was born of Bathsheba should die in infancy. The early death of this child was a judgment for the sin of its parents. Many infants die for original sin, the sin of their nature, for which all deserve to die in infancy. But though all deserve thus to die, yet many live to old age.

This child of Bathsheba might have lived if the sin of its parents had not constituted an additional reason for executing upon it the sin of its nature, its original sin, as Solomon lived, who was another son of Bathsheba.

This is illustrated in Adonijah, who deserved death for conspiracy to usurp the throne. But Solomon would have forgiven him for that if he had not given an additional offense by coveting Abishag. This additional offense induced Solomon to put him to death for treason. 1 Kings ii. 17-23. Matt. xviii. 32-34.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 10. And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

If Shimei had been commanded of God to curse David, he would have been justifiable, and would not have forfeited the confidence and good will of the king. But this was not what David intended. He only meant, that God in his holy providence had sent this affliction upon David, and therefore he would meekly bow in submission to Providence.

We may learn from it a lesson of meekness under injuries, from this wise and pious example. Every insult shown to us, every injury done to us, is equally an appointment of God's holy and wise providence over us. Meekness therefore under injuries, is not only a characteristic of piety, but is also the surest method of conciliating the divine interference in our favor. David said, "It may be, that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. xii. 19.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 25. And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went into Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

These women, Abigail and Zeruiah, were David's sisters, so that Joab and Amasa were cousins german, and were nephews to David, and their mother was Nahash, the wife of Jesse. It is no uncommon thing to name the mother in speaking of children. How frequently are Joab and his brothers called the sons of Zeruiah, and never the sons of Ithra. 1 Kings xv. 10.

There are a number of instances of women and men having the same name, as Shelomith, Judah and Abijah. And although Nahash was a man's name generally, it seems here to be a name of Jesse's wife.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 3. And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them.

As his son Absalom had gone in unto them, it would have been incest for David to retain them as his wives. It was also shameful incest in Absalom to uncover his father's skirt by approaching them. The prophet complains of the degeneracy of Israel by saying, "A man and his father will go in unto the same maid." Illicit intercourse had the same effect as marriage in making the parties one flesh. He that is joined to an harlot is one body with her. Amos ii. 7. 1 Cor. vi. 16.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 4. And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.

It is remarkable the scriptures so often express sentiments in words so different from the words which we would employ to express the same sentiments. As Saul had been dead many years, it was unnatural that the Gibeonites should speak of not receiving silver or gold from him; because that was impossible. But they meant to include his representatives—his family—with him. But then they would be chargeable with tautology, for they mentioned his house or family expressly.

The Gibeonites were a degraded class in Israel, lying under the curse of Joshua and the elders, pronounced upon them many centuries before. Although they occupied the inferior position of bondmen, they appear to have had honorable principles; they distinguished between the people of Israel who had not injured them, and Saul who had. This is what they meant when they said, "Thou shalt not kill any man in Israel for the injury done us by Saul;" *i. e.*, any man of the nation not of Saul's family; they distinguished between the common people, between the king and his subjects, when both were equally Israel.

The famine with the explanation, verse 1, proves that Saul

was displeasing to God for slaying the Gibeonites. And although the Gibeonites had long forgotten the injury, yet God had not forgotten it, but sent the judgment upon the nation thirty-seven years after the king had committed it, in the famine that was sent upon the nation. Why this judgment was delayed so long, and came in the succeeding reign, we do not know. But it teaches us that with God one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. So futile are the sinner's hopes of impunity or of God's forgetting. See note on 1 Kings ii. 27.

The punishment of Saul's children and grandchildren, for his sin which they never knew of his committing, will seem dark to those who do not comprehend the revelation, "That his ways are not our ways;" but Eli's descendants perished centuries after the crimes committed in his administration. 1 Sam. xxii. 11. Exod xx. 5; xxxiv. 7. Amalek was destroyed centuries after their offense. 1 Sam. xv. 2. 1 Kings xi. 11, 12. 2 Kings ix. 7, 8.

The Lord sees good and infinite reasons for such delays, and such punishment of posterity centuries after crimes committed.

I. KINGS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 5. Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king.

The father's name is generally mentioned in identifying a person. With respect, however, to David's relatives it is different, for the mother's name is more generally used, as sons of Zeruah. 2 Sam. ii. 18; iii. 39; viii. 16; xvi. 10; xvii. 25. Haggith was a wife of David and Adonijah's mother.

Adonijah was the fourth son of David, and now was the eldest son, or heir apparent to the throne (Chiliab), as well as Ammon and Absalom being dead. As his father was superannuated, he thought he could easily take the throne by right of primogeniture. This, however, was wicked in him, for he knew that the Lord had given the throne to Solomon. ii. 15. Vices and judgments attended David's house or family. 2 Sam. xii. 10, 11.

9. And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants.

It is so important to note the obvious truth, that the word *all*, according to the scripture idiom, is used where less than all is intended, that some repetition may be indulged in calling attention to the fact. There is great importance in noting this idiom, for without attention to it the counsels of God will be darkened, and error will triumph over truth. The truth of many passages rests upon this idiom. Luke xvi. 16; xix. 15. John i. 9. Rom. xii. 3. 1 Cor. iii. 5; iv. 5; xii. 7. Jude 1. Heb. ii. 9. 1 John ii. 2. 2 Kings xiv. 6.

The words *all* and *every* commonly meant only a great part, or all of a class. For instance, 1 Cor. xv. 34, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. As it was with Adam, all that were in him died, so it shall be with Christ, *all in him* shall be made alive. See comment on Heb. ii. 9.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 9. Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

The translators did not give the Hebrew particle *vau* its proper force in this passage, else they would have rendered the last clause, "Neither bring thou down his hoar head," etc. This would have given to the original its true meaning. As David had forgiven Shimei, and sworn fidelity, neither he nor Solomon could punish him for cursing David; for the crime was forgiven and the pardon sealed with an oath. What David could not justly do, he could not ask Solomon to do.

As Shimei had shown himself an enemy to David and to his house, and therefore a dangerous subject, it was right in David to warn Solomon, to hold him not guiltless, not to confide in him. As to what he should do in thus guarding against any treachery from him, David left to Solomon's own discretion, only with this reservation, that Solomon must not punish him for that fault which had been forgiven. His hoar head bring thou not down to the grave with blood for that offense.

We do not derive little aid from the subject in understanding this passage. Solomon's treatment of Shimei is a comment on his understanding, and proves he understood David to mean that he should be watchful of him; for he only confined him to the limits of the city, in which Shimei enjoyed all the freedom of other citizens in all other respects.

The translators were well aware of the converse property of the Hebrew particle; for they have translated many passages negatively by virtue of it. But they failed in a few. Exod. xxii. 12. 1 Sam. xxv. 31.

As the apostles and primitive church never used the Lord's Prayer as a form, we learn by their practice that it was not intended to be so used, but given only as a sample of judicious prayer. As they never forgave sins authoritatively, we learn how they understood. John xx. 23.

27. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; that he might fulfill the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

It is not necessary to refer this intention to Solomon, but to the Lord in thrusting out Abiathar. Solomon may have thrust out Abiathar for uniting in the conspiracy with Adonijah. But the Lord intended by the hand of Solomon to fulfill, etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 35. When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them.

Confessing the name of Jehovah was important, and especially as idolatry was prevalent. But turning from sin with confession, repentance, and forsaking it, were essential to true worship. Many pray to God without confessing their sins, without loathing and abhorring themselves on account of them, and without forsaking them. But such prayer is the prayer of the hypocrite.

Job said, Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. xl. 3.

And David, Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God. Ps. li. 14.

Ezra said, O my God I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up to the heavens. ix. 6.

Isaiah said, We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. lxiv. 6.

The publican cried, God be merciful to me a sinner.

The apostle confessed, I am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Confession of sin and guilt, and a particular mention of them, seem essential to contrition—to true repentance, true worship and petition for mercy.

So in prayer for the nation, the nation's sins should be particularized.

52. That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant.

Here is an instance of letting the subject define the words used in expressing a sentiment. As the prayer was for divine attention it was not material by what terms this attention was solicited, whether by divine eyes or ears. The meaning must necessarily be the same. Joshua x. 12, 13; Exod. xv. 8.

53. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth to be thine inheritance.

Jehovah separated the descendants of Abraham as a people, and as a nation to enjoy greater mercies and richer blessings from his hand, than any other nation. If he can make this difference between nations, it will be difficult to show why he can not make such difference both temporally and spiritually with individuals, since all are alike lost and condemned; especially as all favor must be by grace, and not by works: for nations are only an association of individuals. What he may do for 20,000,000 of individuals, surely he may do for a less number, or for one.

This doctrine of divine sovereignty is sufficiently asserted in the scriptures; but the carnal mind never can be reconciled to it unless accompanied with some dogma that counteracts or neutralizes it.

The warfare about divine sovereignty began in heaven and will end in hell. It will not end with the termination of this world; but will rage in the lower.

Spiritual-minded men understand this subject, because they believe the word. And understanding it, they are prompt in acknowledging it. And they bless and praise the Lord for it, as did Solomon in this devout and solemn prayer. Ps. xciii. 1; xcix. 1. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 21. Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bond-service unto this day.

As the Hebrews were God's chosen people, his peculiar people, he would not allow them to be enslaved as bondmen. He had them made bondmen in Egypt for centuries. And a Hebrew might be sold to a Hebrew or a Gentile for six years. Solomon therefore exempted the Hebrews from the more servile and laborious duties in building the temple. But the Gentiles, the aborigines of the country, were put to perpetual bond-service without any release or advantage from the jubilee. Joshua said unto the Gibeonites, None of you shall be freed from being bondmen. If they were not to be freed from that state it was perpetual. Many centuries had

passed since this curse was pronounced upon them ; and yet they remained under it in Solomon's reign.

The limit of Hebrew bond-service was confined and limited to the Jewish economy, and was not carried into the gospel dispensation. As their bondmen were Gentiles, their service was unlimited, perpetual. If God's covenant to make all things work together for good to his children, is kept with them, as they know it will be, then their bondage will be made a blessing, as Joseph's was. 1 Cor. vii. 21.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 24. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

All the earth, must be taken with great limitations : a few out of different nations is all that can be inferred from this expression. *All the earth*, has reference to various nations rather than to individuals.

Arminians and semi-Pelagians have no foundation.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 15. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people ; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

It is written the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord : He turneth it. Prov. xxi. 1. No man therefore can be sure that he will be able to control his own heart, memory or judgment ; for a man's reason and free agency are in instances entirely taken away. Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing ? But he did it. 2 Kings viii. 13.

I will never deny thee. Matt. xxvi. 33, 35. 1 Sam. xiv. 16. The Lord is under no covenant or obligation to continue wicked men in the enjoyment of their free agency or their intellect. If he withholds them from pious men, it shall be made to work good to them. Rom. viii. 28. Creatures are not independent of God, without whom they can do nothing. John xv. 5. Jas. v. 13-15. 1 Pet. iv. 11.

20. And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel.

All Israel means here all the ten tribes. They were named Israel, while the two tribes were called Judah. All Israel means all that revolted with Jeroboam. Although the word *all* generally has to be taken in a restricted sense, yet it is sometimes used in its natural and unrestricted sense.

27. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam.

Although the Lord had exalted Jeroboam to the government of the ten tribes; and charged him to walk in his commandments, he thus willfully and knowingly departed from them from political motives; for wicked men's politics override their piety or their moral principles; for they have no true piety. Jeroboam does not pretend to believe in idolatry, and only pleads for it on the ground of convenience. Convenience was before duty. These will please themselves; they will please their own carnal heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 33. After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way.

But why did he not? for surely he knew his duty. It was told him by the prophet. 1 Kings xi. 33, 38. His secret purpose was to prevent their return to Rehoboam; but his avowed object was the public good. If he knew what was right, why did he not do it? Why do not all men in our day remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy? Why do not all men turn from their evil ways, and seek the Lord while he may be found? His device defeated itself.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 13. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him : for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

House is family, children. Saul was an evil man ; but his son Jonathan was a good man. If there were good in this son of Jeroboam, it was of God, of his good Spirit. Yet he died in childhood while his wicked father lived. His father's sins were visited upon him.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 10. And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

Maachah was his grandmother. v. 2. She is called his mother. 2 Chron. xv. 16. But mother is used in the sense of ancestress, just as father is used in the sense of ancestor. 1 Kings xi. 33. 2 Chron. xvii. 3.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 4. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook ; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

The subject expounds the word commanded, and shows that it means, he had decreed that the ravens should furnish him; and had provided for it. See v. 9.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 7. And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

The pronoun is often left to be referred to its antecedent by the sense which is; art thou the prophet Elijah?

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 2. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

She had reference to the prophets of Baal whom Elijah had slain. xviii. 40. As she had patronized them, she was disposed to espouse their cause, and avenge their death.

The character of a people may be known by the ministers they patronize.

This woman was too ungodly to understand divine things. She did not know that the kingdom and the power are the Lord's. She believed that she could destroy the prophet of God when she would; and bound herself under a great curse to effect it; just as more than forty Jews did to kill Paul. Acts xxiii. 12. 1 Kings xii. 15.

While the wicked rage, God moves on in the majesty of his counsels, and accomplishes them all without the least impediment; while the ravings of the wicked promote his decrees, and their own destruction.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 42. And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction.

In his law God appointed such to utter destruction. Deut. vii. 2, 16, 24; xx. 10-16. Not in his decrees.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSES 7, 8. And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

It clearly appears from this conversation, that these kings both understood the difference between the real characters of the prophets, and knew clearly the prophets of the Lord from the false prophets. When Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of the Lord, Ahab understood the force and meaning of the inquiry. They both seem to have known that those prophets who had spoken were not prophets of the Lord; and of course were only false or lying prophets; and really were not prophets.

Jehoshaphat, out of complaisance to Ahab, allowed him to call, and to interrogate his prophets until he was satisfied. But knowing that they were of no account, and their predictions as wind, he judiciously and piously inquired, if there were not one of the prophets of the Lord in that vicinity, that they might inquire of him. Ahab answered, there is one man, Micaiah, of whom we may inquire of the Lord, clearly betraying his hypocrisy, and conceding that they had not been inquiring of the Lord when they consulted the other prophets.

As Ahab was in need of Jehoshaphat's assistance in the campaign, seeming to acknowledge the reasonableness of inquiring of the Lord, immediately sends for Micaiah; which he would not have done, if he had not known that he was such an one as Jehoshaphat had asked for.

His objection against Micaiah was not against his fidelity as a prophet of Jehovah, but that he did not prophesy in his favor, and speak smooth and comforting things to him as a man-pleaser. Ahab could not but know that a prophet of the Lord must speak God's word; and not what man would have him speak. Balaam, though an ungodly man, knew that he must please God in executing the prophetic office without any dictation from man. Num. xxii. 18. When Ahab made this unreasonable objection to Micaiah, Jehoshaphat replied, let not the king say so; let not the king insist upon this objec-

tion; for it was without any force in his view. This was reasonable in Jehoshaphat; for as Ahab was a wicked man, the prophet would have no good to say of him.

Although he pretended to be wroth with Micaiah for his prophecy, and ordered him to prison, it was only to save appearances, and make his way seem clear to go up to Ramoth Gilead; for he knew that the words of the prophet could not be despised, although they were rejected. Although he acted unbelief, it was only in hypocrisy; for he was inclined to think that the words of the prophet were true. This is shown by disguising himself, when he went into the battle, and requesting Jehoshaphat to put on his robes. If he had not so far believed the prophecy as to fear that it was true, he would not have adopted this method of avoiding the fate predicted for him in the prophecy, as if he could thereby defeat the counsel of God.

Thus it appears that such is the obduracy of the carnal, deceitful heart that the wicked reject and disbelieve what in their conscience they feel to be true. Micaiah was an accredited prophet of the Lord; his character, as such, was established. It was well known that his prophecies in the name of the Lord were authoritative. This conviction appears in Ahab's readily naming him to Jehoshaphat. And he must have known that truth was as necessary for him, as it was for Jehoshaphat; although he did not believe so. This is the inconsistency of unbelievers: they hate the light that they can not repel.

When Herod slew the children of Bethlehem, it was not because he did not believe in the prophecies concerning the advent of Christ; but because he did believe them.

The thieves, counterfeiters, and assassins, who suffer condign punishment, do not commit their crimes in ignorance, but in unbelief of their suffering for them. A wicked man loves sin, and does it in contempt of known duty—disbelieving the plainest evidence. What greater evidence could the Hebrews have had than they actually did have, of the prophetic character of Moses, Joshua, etc.? Yet they made a golden calf, and worshiped it, when they knew better. In the study of their history, from Exodus to Judges, it is evident that they sinned against light and against conviction. But all sin is not so; for there is the sin of ignorance.

Because wicked men dislike truth and holiness, dislike to have their consciences always reproving—dislike to retain God in their knowledge, they turn away from God and truth and dislike, as Ahab turned from Micaiah. Rom. i. 20, 21. The faults of the wicked and the errors of the heretic arise from

their hearts, rather than from their understanding. Therefore it is written, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. Chaps. xii. 27-33; xiii. 4, 33.

When Jehoshaphat saw how Ahab despised and persecuted the Lord's prophet for his respect and fidelity, he ought to have reproved him, and withdrawn from the campaign. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but rather reprove them."

Wicked men may not be aware how the public appreciate their character. Doubtless Jehoshaphat hated the conduct of Ahab, as did others.

The correctness of public sentiment about the real character of public men, though sometimes very erroneous, is often very correct. The character of king Ahaz was so well known, and so correctly appreciated in public sentiment, that the people did not inter him with the kings of Israel. 2 Chron. xxviii. 27; xxiv. 25, verifying the declaration of the Lord: By their fruits ye shall know them. Matt. vii. 16; xii. 33, 35.

22. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, and do so.

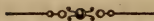
The prophet here repeats a vision, which is a divine representation to teach spiritual things, or to instruct in some duty. Such were the parables, and not actual occurrences. They are only symbols, representations of truths. But commentators are agreed that parables are not to be taken upon all fours, or that they do not teach every thing that they may seem to teach, but only the main idea that is the theme of the discourse. This assemblage of holy and unholy personages resembles that contained in Job i. 6 and ii. 1. And truly represents to us God's control over good and evil spirits. It seems to us unnatural that such a council or convention of good spirits and evil spirits be held: but God's ways are not our ways. Whether they are so assembled or not, the truth that God sends evil spirits is clear. 2 Sam. xvi. 10. They obey his voice in fear without any heartfelt obedience, and without any reward. Balaam asked of the Lord whether he should go with Balak's messengers. The Lord told him to go. He went. And the Lord was angry with him because he obeyed God. Num. xxii. 20-22. The legion asked permission to enter the swine; and he granted their prayer. So

he gave Satan leave to afflict Job. Permission to do what we ask does not make it necessarily right for us to do it; because our heart may be *wrong, carnal, wicked*; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin; whether it be preaching or praying, it is sin: obeying God's commandments may be great sins, through the want of faith, through the want of a right heart. Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37. In reading the scriptures, going to church, preaching the gospel, praying to God, we may be sinning—nay, we must be sinning, and only sinning, if our heart be wrong or unbelieving.

Surely wicked spirits had never been if God could not control them, and get himself honor and glory by them. There is then a sense in which all wicked beings do the will of God; but it is a bad sense; for they act with a wicked unholy heart. If love be the fulfillment of the law, then enmity in the heart must be the breach of it. It is sometimes said, "that God does what wicked men do;" and what Satan does is ascribed to God. Isa. xxxvii. 23-27. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 1 Chron. xxi. 1. 1 Sam. xvi. 14. But love is the fulfillment of the law in that it leads to it; or secures obedience. Matt. xviii. 7. Luke xvii. 1.

How evident is it that God is on the throne, and wields the scepter over all the kingdoms of the universe. He controls the wicked and the good by both physical and moral power.

II. KINGS.



CHAPTER III.

VERSE 14. And Elisha said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

God makes a difference between persons for his own sake, and out of respect to himself, and for the furtherance of his own holy and wise counsels, and out of respect to his Son, the Redeemer and Intercessor for his people. But not out of any respect to their persons, but out of respect to his Son, to whom he had given them.



CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 33. And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?

No remarks are made upon this last clause, for fear of not doing justice to it.



CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 10. And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that he shall surely die.

The prophet answered the question put to him correctly. He might recover from his disease. It was not mortal: there was nothing in it that would prevent his recovery. Having

answered that question, the prophet turns to the messenger, and tells him that Benhadad should surely die, *i. e.*, by other means.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 30. And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

The commendation of Jehu's administration is limited to one point, viz : the execution of God's judgments upon the house of Ahab. Besides this, his administration was extremely wicked, like that of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. v. 29.

From some circumstances, a man may pay respect to some duties without any proper motive. Yet as this apparent obedience may have the semblance of piety, it is rewarded, although it deserves no reward ; for all is wicked that a wicked man does.

As the iniquities of fathers are visited upon the children, see note on 2 Sam. xii. 14 ; so also one faithful act of a wicked man secures favors to his posterity to the fourth generation.

The execution of the severest judgments of God's appointment to wickedness, conciliates divine favor and will be rewarded in temporal things ; but not with salvation, nor with saving grace. Num. xxv. 11-13. Deut. xix. 12, 13. Num. xxxv. 30-33.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 2. And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

The value of a pious and an intelligent counselor is beyond estimation ; for if a blind guide promotes evil, a competent guide promotes our good. 2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 18.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 6. But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

To interpret this passage in opposition to the doctrine of imputation is to misinterpret it. The doctrine of imputation is an essential part of the divine economy. But God has forbidden men to practice it in civil government. Although he visits the iniquities of the parents upon their children, Exod. xx. 5, yet he does not allow men to exercise his prerogative. He takes the life of an infant; but man may not do it. God sends pestilence, but man may not. This is one of those passages that must be interpreted. If every man shall be put to death for his own sin, then no man can live; for it is written that all have sinned. Rom. iii. 23. If all men have sinned, and must suffer death, then all must be put to death, and the world must be depopulated.

Let no one, therefore, insist upon a strict interpretation of 1 John ii. 2. Rom. xii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 5; xii. 7. Heb. ii. 9. Every man who incurs capital punishment, must suffer death for his own sin to the exclusion of his family, his parents, his children. We see the absurdity of the Arminian interpretation.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 20. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

The phrase, all the seed of Israel, is to be interpreted as the ten tribes, *i. e.*, those who continued in their connection; for many on account of their idolatry had seceded from them in the reign of Jeroboam and had embodied themselves with Judah. Although these were literally the seed of Israel, yet they are

not included in this rejection. 2 Chron. xi. 16, 17. No tribe is lost. Ezekiel xxxvii. 16. This explains the language of the New Testament in addressing the Jews as the twelve tribes of Israel. Acts xxvi. 7, Jas. i. 1.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 35. And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

The great body of the army were slain because they were fighting against God and his people. And when the few that survived with the king arose in the morning, the army was no more. They were corpses. No one will suppose that the inspired writer meant to say, those who arose in the morning found themselves dead persons. Here we see how the word *all* is used.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

Such was the condition of things, that it was best that Hezekiah die: and a prophet was sent to warn him of it. He understood the warning, and knew that it was true; and unless he should obtain respite, he must die.

2. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord.

The Ninevites knew that God heard and answered prayer: it would be strange if king Hezekiah did not know as much. True, he does not hear and answer all prayer; for in some cases it would be improper. Deut. iii. 26. Prov. i. 28; xiv. 6. Luke xiii. 24. When he refuses to answer prayer, it is not because his decree is in the way; but because it would not be

right in itself. God's decree puts nothing in the way of doing that which is wise and good, to do to his children or to his enemies. What he has not decreed to do, is in all cases what he saw it was not good to do. What men do not pray for, they may be hindered from receiving for that very reason: for that may be one circumstance that makes it not good for them to receive.

God would have men know the propriety of prayer, and be encouraged thereto; therefore he has answered prayer when it was not good, *i. e.*, not expedient for those who asked. Thus he allowed Lot to flee to Zoar on his request when it was not best for him. That the Lord does things to encourage sinners to duty, is shown also. 1 Tim. i. 16. Gen. xix. 17-21. And it is proved by Israel's being spared at prayer of Moses. Exod. xxxii. 14; and being allowed to divorce their wives. Matt. xix. 8. Election and predestination are no hindrance to prayer, or to the use of any means. The Arminian never committed a greater error than in supposing that the doctrines of grace discourage the use of means; for those who believe them use means. God has elected some to salvation, and to attain this salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. They are all decreed together. They must believe the truth, and be sanctified by the Spirit, and made holy or perish. The decree of election will not save one who lives and dies in unregeneracy.

Before the world was made the Creator saw every individual of both fallen angels and fallen men. And he knew all the circumstances of each individual case, and what his infinite benevolence, his tender mercy, and his infinite justice would require. And what he saw that it would be right and proper to do, in the exercise of his benevolence, his tender mercy, and his infinite justice, he decreed to do, and nothing more; so that his decrees throw no obstacle in the way of exercising any of his attributes, or hearing any prayer. If he do not grant what some ask, it is because he sees that it would not be right in itself, independent of his decrees; for he is just as free to do good, and to do all his pleasure, as if he had no decrees.

If some can not understand that God is infinite; but think him altogether such a one as themselves, they will not understand—they can not understand. Dan. xii. 10.

6. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

And if this is an evidence of a change in the divine purpose, it is equally an evidence that the scriptures are not true: for they teach that he is without a shadow of turning.

There is evidence of turning in Hezekiah, his weeping and praying. The Lord answered his prayer just as he eternally intended to do. The warning was given to excite the prayer, that the assurance of fifteen years might be given him. The assurance of fifteen additional years is to date from Hezekiah's sickness; not that his life was to be fifteen years longer than it was intended to be, but fifteen years longer than that sickness seemed to indicate. If he had died of that sickness he would have died fifteen years before his time. But the warning leading him to repent and pray, preserved his whole life in all its integrity.

A man's days being cut off, lengthened, and shortened, are frequently spoken of in the scriptures. Those who do not desire to wrest the scriptures to their own destruction, interpret them in consistency with the divine attributes. Gen. vi. 3. Exod. xx. 12. Deut. iv. 26, 40. 1 Kings iii. 14. Job xxi. 21. Ps. lv. 23. xc. 10. cii. 23, 24. Prov. x. 27. Eccl. vii. 17. Isa. xxxviii. 10. Jer. xvii. 11.

He who made the planets and fixed them in their orbits, so that no one impinges upon another, could easily so arrange all parts and ramifications of his decrees.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 20. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. ♥

This promise to Josiah related to the evil which was coming upon Jerusalem, for his ancestor's great wickedness, and which his eyes were not permitted to see. The promise that he should die in peace, respected only those judgments. His being killed in battle with the king of Egypt, was not being gathered to his grave in peace, in all respects; but it was in peace respecting those judgments to which the promise related. Chap. xxiv. 3, 4.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 25. And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart.

The line of kings here taken into account, was the line of the kings of Judah from Rehoboam to Zerubbabel; not including those before Rehoboam who were kings of Israel. In this line from Rehoboam, to the end of the Jewish dispensation, there was no one equal to Josiah for eminence of pious fidelity. And yet good as he was, he was slain in battle, as was wicked Ahab, and Absalom, and pious Jonathan the friend of David. Good men must die, as well as the wicked. The pious are taken away from the evil to come.

I. CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 31. And the sons of Appaim; Ishi. And the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. And the children of Sheshan, Ahlai.

It may be to us inexplicable, but it is no less a fact, that the inspired writer uses the word sons, when only one person is meant, and the word children also in apposition to a name in the singular number. We perceive therefore that grammatical accuracy was not the object of the inspired writers, as it was to adapt the language to the subject, so as to make the meaning entirely evident. By this use of the plural number no obscurity is occasioned.

In like manner the name of God is frequently used in the plural in the Hebrew. But it is not always so used. But this occasions no obscurity, nor leads to any doubt of the unity of the Godhead.

Both the singular and the plural pronoun are used for the children of Israel in the same verse. Exod. xii. 24.

So when it is said the thieves cast the same in his teeth, it is sufficiently evident, that although it was done on their part, that the reproach came from their company, yet only one engaged in the act. Matt. xxvii. 44. Luke xxiii. 40. See another instance. 1 Chron. vi. 22.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 14. The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel, whom she bare.

Although the text furnishes no antecedent to the pronoun *she*, we can be at no loss about its application to Manasseh's wife.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 3. And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh.

The city of Jerusalem belonged to Benjamin. But those of other tribes who preferred dwelling there, were allowed to do so without any jealousy; for they were brethren.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 3. Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord.

The word prophet and its derivatives were generally used in relation to Moses, Isaiah, and those who were inspired to reveal the mind of God to men; but here, as is common in the New Testament, it has a different meaning, and relates to praise and worship offered to God. 1 Sam. x. 5; xviii. 10. 1 Chron. xxv. 1. Religious exercises are all called prophesying. 1 Cor. xiv. 3; iv. 24.

II. CHRONICLES.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 4. And the porch that was in the front of the house, the length of it was according to the breadth of the house.

The porch in the front of the temple was twenty cubits long, but joined to it. It projected ten cubits in width from the temple, and was an hundred and twenty cubits high. As the temple was only thirty cubits in height, 1 Kings vi. 2, 3, the porch was ninety cubits higher; and formed a kind of tower, rising like a steeple or tower above the body of the building.

15. Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high.

The seeming discrepancy in the height of these pillars, compared with 1 Kings vii. 15, is not relieved by supposing that the two writers used cubits of different lengths; for it is obvious that both writers used the same cubit in giving the height of each chapter as five cubits, which proves that each used the same measure. If both agree in the chapters, why should they disagree in the height of their trunks?

Another fact is that in Kings we have the measure of each pillar and chapter separately; while in Chronicles we have the measure of each chapter given separately, and the measure of the pillars without any distinction of their measure. It seems to be that their measure is given collectively as thirty-five cubits.

These are facts whether they afford any solution of the difficulty or not.

It is another fact that numbers with fractions are often by the inspired writers given in whole or round numbers. And then if the shaft of each pillar was seventeen and one-half cubits, exact measure, it might in round numbers be called, in Kings, eighteen cubits, and the two collectively might be named as thirty-five cubits; for they would be so in fact.

If the cubit previous to the captivity was nearly three feet, as Angus says, Goliath was eighteen feet high. Therefore it is most reasonable that he is mistaken.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 11. And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basins.

And in verse 19 it is said that Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God. There is no inconsistency in these statements; work done is correctly ascribed to the laborer and to the employer. A man may be said to do what he employs others to do. *Qui facit per.*

In verse 15 Hiram is called Solomon's father, because of the efficient service rendered the king in the various works of the temple.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 36. If they sin against thee, for there is no man which sinneth not.

It was deemed important to have this evangelical doctrine recorded in so conspicuous a place that it may take our attention. No Christian can be ignorant of it; for his experience keeps him acquainted with it.

He that is ignorant of the law of sin that dwells in him shows himself an unregenerated man. See Prov. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. Job ix. 20. Rom. vii. 9, 17, 23, 25.

Every man knows that this is a Bible doctrine, whether he believes it or not; for all men do not believe what they know is plainly revealed: for all men have not faith. Though all know that it is written, Let your women keep silence in the churches; Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; Drink ye all of it; Thou shalt not make any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven or earth; All men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father; Chosen in him before the foundation of the world; all these sacred passages are well known; but despised and rejected. Wicked men will believe what suits them—no matter what is written in God's word. Their faith is not in him, nor their love toward him. Rom. viii. 7, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Thess. ii. 11. Rom. ix. 17, 18.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 12. And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which she had brought unto the king.

Solomon gave her all she requested, in the room of the presents she had brought to him.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 17. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

The high places for the worship of idols were not taken down, removed, but the heart of Asa was perfect, clear of the sin of using them, or of worshipping idols. He was perfect as to this sin.

No fallen man has a heart that is perfect in the sense of being free from sin; as long as he lives he is unholy, defiled with sin. We have just seen this truth in remarks on chapter vi. 36; and we may not interpret scriptures in contradiction to each other.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 17. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem.

Although the use of means is appointed to accomplish our purposes, yet in the age of miracles they were sometimes forbidden. This change, with many others, is common with the perfect, immutable, and infinite Jehovah. They are some of the varieties with which he relieves and adorns his administration. They are not imperfections but beauties. They do not show mutability, because they were always intended. Gideon's army only used their lamps and pitchers.

Thus we are taught not to rely on means alone when we use them, but remember that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor success to men of skill. David was not as strong as Goliath, yet he conquered him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 5. And a third part shall be at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord.

The Levites were divided into classes, each class having their own particular duties assigned. And although they were of the Hebrews, or people of Israel, yet when the priests and the people are distinguished, each was viewed separately. So when the royal family and the people are spoken of, they are taken as separate classes. In this passage, *all the people* means all the rest of the people, all that were not priests. 2 Sam. xxi. 4.

CHAPTER XXV.

VERSE 16. And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.

The king did not like to hear the message of the prophet, and for an excuse objected to him that he was not one of the king's counsel. The prophet obeyed the king and desisted. But having commenced his message, the king had learned the purport of it, and was as accountable as if he had heard it all. When men willfully reject instruction, it leads us to fear that they are given up. 1 Sam. ii. 25. 2 Chron. xxv. 20.

CHAPTER XXX.

VERSE 12. Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord.

When God withdrew restraints from Pharaoh, and left him

to his own evil heart to lead him in a wayward course, we might easily calculate the consequences. It is so in families and in nations. Children that fear and honor their parents, show that there are blessings in reserve for that family.

When a nation is orderly, moral and law-abiding, civil rulers will be honored and obeyed, and God will bless rulers and people, but not because they deserve to be so blessed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VERSE 31. Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.

The wonder that was done in the land was the bringing of the shadow of the sun ten degrees back upon the dial of Ahaz.

This change in the time of the day was obvious to all nations. And it was natural for people in all nations to search into it and inquire about it. The king of Babylon hearing of this miracle in favor of Hezekiah, sent ambassadors to Hezekiah to inquire into it. To give them the desired information was proper. But to show to these profane and uncircumcised heathens the sacred things of the house of God was not so. In this the Lord tried Hezekiah, that he might have demonstrative proof of what was in Hezekiah's heart. 2 Kings xx. 12, 13. When the Son of God asked whose image and superscription were on the coin showed to him, Matt. xxii. 20, it was not because he did not know, but it was because he wanted to hear it from their lips to ground his reply upon it. And when he asked the disciples how many loaves they had, it was because he would have the number of the loaves and of the fishes to be put on the record as an essential circumstance of the miracle. When he asked how many baskets of fragments they had gathered on several occasions, it was because he would have the facts before their minds, to impress thereby a lesson of faith upon them.

As it was the Lord who left Hezekiah to try him, it was God who desired to know. He that tries is the one who wishes to know, wishes to know demonstratively, as is shown in relation to Israel: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the

wilderness, to prove thee, humble thee, and to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." Deut. viii. 2. Exod. xvi. 4. Deut. xiii. 3; xxxii. 20. Gen. xxii. 12.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VERSE 6. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards.

One diabolical practice was not enough for him, but he went extensively into such practices, as if he would complete the circle.

If a good man desires to know anything he will consult God's word, or submissively remain without knowledge. He will not take any unlawful means; he will not resort to fortune-tellers, wizards, necromancers, spirit-rappers or mediums, for such means are forbidden; they are not his ways, ways that are taught him. The practice of such ways mark an evil character.

When Satan would tempt the Lord Jesus, he omitted one part of the passage he quoted, viz: *in all thy ways*. A Christian's ways are prescribed by his heavenly Father; in them only will he walk, because in all things he must acknowledge God.

9. So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.

Wickedness in high places is in danger of exerting a wide influence in community. It is said of Jeroboam that he made Israel to sin. It is also written, "One sinner destroyeth much good." Every one should watch and pray that his influence may be for good among men.

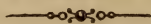
CHAPTER XXXVI.

VERSE 13. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.

The popish sentiment that faith is not to be kept with heretics, was the principle on which king Zedekiah acted. And here the inspired writer lays it to his charge as perjury. The king of Babylon raised him to the throne of Israel and exacted from him an oath of fidelity. Without taking this oath he could not have been king. And he could not throw off the obligation which he had taken upon himself without the guilt of perjury.

Joshua and the princes of Israel had solemnly made a treaty with the Gibeonites to spare their lives. Although this treaty was obtained by fraud on the part of the Gibeonites, yet it was held sacred by Israel.

NEHEMIAH.



CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 8. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

The office of the ministry is to teach and expound the Holy Scriptures. They may not wrest it, but must give the mind of the Spirit, not their own inventions, imaginations or superstitions, but the real truth as the servants of Christ, as it is written: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth." Mal. ii. 7.

J O B .



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

There have been some who doubted whether Job was a real character, or only a fictitious one. That he was a real character ought to be admitted without any hesitation. His history, and the references made to him, settle the question. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. The country in which he lived is shown by the nations that made war upon him, as the Sabeans and Chaldeans, for they occupied the country of Arabia south-east of Palestine; and he lived in Midian, in which Moses was afterward an exile.

As Noah had a descendant, of the family of Shem, by the name of Uz, we are led to conclude that Job was of the posterity of Shem and of Uz; that the country derived its name from Uz, its former possessor. Gen. x. 23. 1 Chron. i. 17.

The country that bore this name extended from the Dead Sea to the Elanitic Gulf, which pertains to the Red Sea. The country was formerly occupied in part by the Horim who were conquered by the Edomites, who occupied it. Lam. iv. 21.

Job did not acquire a knowledge of true religion from the Edomites; for he lived and died before Esau was born. He was, if we may calculate from his age, cotemporary with Nahor. As the true religion descended in the line of Noah and Shem, we can account for Job's acquaintance with it.

From the age to which Job attained, he may have lived until the birth of Isaac. As Abraham lived in Canaan he would not be likely to form any acquaintance with him. His great afflictions were endured before Abraham was born.

He is called a perfect and an upright man. The meaning of this phrase is, a man deeply and truly pious. When the Psalmist says, Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace, it is only one and the same man whose end is peace and who is perfect. Therefore perfect

and upright are of one and the same import, indicating true piety.

That he was not without sin, is evident from his own statement. ix. 20.

Perfect is sometimes used in the sense of sinless. Job so used it. ix. 20. But the prophet, when he applies it to the king of Tyrus or Tyre, can hardly be understood as using it in the sense of sinless, when he affirmed that he had been perfect from the day in which he was created. Ezek. xxviii. 15.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1. After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

This translation is too rough; he wished evil to his day as is set forth particularly in what follows. In this there was neither profanity nor malevolence; for that day was a non-entity: it was past and extinct; so that his wishing evil to it was nothing more than an indirect method of expressing his heavy affliction. The prophet Jeremiah used similar language. And neither he nor Job was censured or reproved for it.

Great injustice is done to Job and to God in the liberty that is taken in censuring Job; for the Lord clears him from all the censures of men, in letting us know, that in his trials he sinned not with his lips nor charged God foolishly; and that he spake the thing that was right. The severe censures which commentators lavish upon this pious man, they do the same to his Lord. Matt. xxv. 40. Many seem forward to censure pious men, whether to commend themselves as appearing better by censuring them they must answer. But it would be well for them to remember, that in censuring him they contradict their Maker.

The cursing his day, as it is called, was only a method which he took to melt the hard and obdurate hearts of his three pious friends who had been sitting there seven days in dumb musings over his unheard of afflictions, without deigning to offer to their afflicted brother one word of consolation, pity, or sympathy. Surely this was long enough to wait; and it was time to employ his eloquence to awaken and arouse their humanity at least. But here he was doomed to disappointment again; for instead of being moved to pity by his lamentations, they let them excite uncharitable suspicions of his piety. And while they were accusing him for these deep

lamentations, he expresses his surprise, "What! Do you imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?" vi. 26. He evidently supposed that, as wise and good men, they would know how to appreciate the words of a man overpowered with afflictions, and not to regard the high coloring which his afflictions imparted to his words, which were as empty air.

We are bound, therefore, to believe that these three friends, his own family, and all his surroundings were for the time under Satan's influence to complete the afflictions and trial of this very pious man. But we being out of that influence, might spare his name and his memory from vituperation.

He did not speak unadvisedly with his lips; for else Satan would have triumphed in the trial of Job: for he was tried to see whether he would hold fast his integrity or not. God would in this trial hold him up, because if he sinned grace was vanquished, and Satan triumphant, which we might know beforehand could not be. Chaps. i. 20, 21; iii. 11-26; vi. 14, 15, 27-30; vii. 17, 18, 20; ix. 1, 4, 12, 14, 15, 20, 29-31; xix. 5-21.

We can not censure a word that Job spake, because it is written, That he had spoken the thing that was right. i. 22; xlii. 8, 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 4. If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression.

Several months must have elapsed since the death of his children; or his friends had time to hear the report in their places of residence, to send messages one to another, and concert the time to convene at his plantation, and to perform the journey; and the second series of calamities had come upon him before they arrived. Several months seem to have been required for all these events. And yet his children were believed to be dead. If these reports that came to him in one day, had not been true, they would have been corrected before this time. Some supposed that they were only lying messages sent him by the father of lies.

The death of Job's children was not for the sin of their parents, nor for their own impiety, or personal transgressions. John ix. 1-3. Children die at all ages for original sin. They were murdered by Satan to gratify his will; and it was per-

mitted of God for good and wise purposes on his part, as the death of Abel, Uriah, Zechariah, and John the Baptist were permitted. Luke xiii. 3-5. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Rom. vi. 23.

9. For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing because our days upon earth are a shadow.

If this verse were interpreted with the same strictness with which some interpret Matt. xxvi. 26, then Job and his friends would be no more than one day old, and yet he had been the father of ten children. Also they would be idiots if they knew nothing: and they would neither need food, clothing, nor burial, if their days on earth were only a shadow.

Those who wish to understand, know assuredly that the sacred scriptures abound in metaphorical language; and that such language is both intelligible and expressive.

13. So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.

What truth can be more interesting, solemn, and alarming than this, that the hope of the hypocrite, of enjoying bliss in heaven, wearing a crown of life, and enjoying eternal bliss, shall perish at death; and his poor deceived soul sink in eternal death. Even Judas said, Master is it I? Matt. xxvi. 25.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 15. If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction.

Christians are directed by the Master to let their light shine before men: and indeed it would seem to be difficult for them to avoid it; for a city that is set upon a hill can not be hid.

When this godly man was so severely tried, he sinned not, but bore all in humility and submission to God. All his trials and his conduct under them afford unmistakable evidence of his piety, by the inspired rule, By their fruits ye shall know them.

He confesses that if he were wicked he could not escape the judgment of God, and on the other hand if he were truly pious, he would not be proud, bold nor haughty, but bow down his head in gratitude and penitential humility. This resembles the humility of the publican, who would not so

much as lift up his face toward heaven. The lineaments of piety are clear and bright in a Christian's life, or ought to be so, else how shall they be known by their fruits? How shall their light shine before others? If a Christian does not see the evidence, it may be because of his humility, his deep contrition which makes him distrust himself: which only confirm to others the clearer evidence of his piety. Job ix. 12-21.

If Job at times spoke on the other hand of his piety before God, and became a fool in boasting, it was because their uncharitable vituperation compelled him. 2 Cor. xii. 11.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

There is great beauty in the style of Job, as in the style of all the inspired writers, in always keeping the point in controversy distinctly before them. Our neglect of their always speaking to the point necessarily involves us in needless obscurity. The accusation against Job was that he was a hypocrite, not a saint. This conclusion was sustained in their view by Providence being against him, as Satan induced them to believe. To this charge he alludes in saying, "But I will maintain mine own ways before him." Why might he not maintain his cause with God, the integrity of his trust and confidence in God and his love to him, when God called him a perfect and upright man? If Job had not heard this commendation, yet it proved a communion between God and his pious soul, that could not fail of producing reconciliation to God, confidence in him and reliance upon him.

28. And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.

Job speaks of himself in the third person: "He as a rotten thing." Such changes of the personal pronoun, both as to number and person, are frequent with the inspired writers.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 14. If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.

Job is discoursing upon the resurrection; but he is asserting the finality of death; when a man dies, he dies forever as to this world and this life; he never will live again in this world.

Job seemed to understand predestination, and to know that the number of his days was appointed and fixed, and could neither be increased nor diminished. God determined that Hezekiah should recover of his sickness, and live fifteen years after it. If he had not mourned, wept and prayed he would have died then. And the warning was given him to thus be the means of prolonging his days. The Sovereign knows how long it was fit and proper that each one live, and has limited their lives accordingly.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 4. Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.

The uncharitable and reviling spirit of Job's friends betray the evil influence under which they thought and spoke. They were pious men and not fallen from grace, but they sinned in following evil suggestions. Charity thinketh not evil, but they imagined evil, and laid it to Job's charge. How did they know that he cast off the fear of God and omitted praying to him. It was false and slanderous. Job describes the hypocrite as being such a character, saying, "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?" xxvii. 10.

5. For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.

If his mouth uttered his own iniquity, he could not be said to use the tongue of the crafty, for that would not be crafty. Error is inconsistent.

6. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

Such is human depravity that men can think evil of good; for the wicked around the Lord Jesus Christ judged him to be evil.

They showed hardness of heart. Job vi. 14; xii. 4; xix. 21, 22.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 7. Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.

Did not Satan wrong him, falsely accuse him, and persecute him to make him do evil? Did not the Sabeans and the Chaldeans wrong him in destroying his servants and his herds? They did great wrong, and yet when he cried to God, he seems not to have been heard or regarded. But his tears and cries were all treasured up before God's throne, until the Lord should see good to turn his captivity, dry his tears, and say to Satan, "It is enough: Job's trials are sufficient." Now you see that your accusations against him are proved to have been false; verses 2, 3, 5, 14, 15. But although his afflictions came through the evil machinations of the wicked, yet they did not come without the hand of Providence; verse 6. *But there is no judgment.* No judgment or relief manifested. That relief lay in the hands of the Judge, waiting the fit time to manifest it. Judgment is sometimes used for the manifestation or execution of it. John viii. 10, 11.

CHAPTER XXXV.

VERSE 2. Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?

Job had not said it; but they might infer it from his saying, "I cry out of wrong; but there is no judgment." Caviling men pervert truth and turn good into evil. As such blasphemy could not come from his mouth, the imputation should not come from theirs. Job's wife, servants and friends, and all concerning him, were put into Satan's power so far as to enable him by them to afflict and try Job. Job i. 12.

King David was once under such influence, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. As depravity remains in pious men, there is material for evil influence to be employed upon them by stirring it up to activity, as the apostle would stir up the pure minds of his brethren. 2 Pet. iii. 1.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

VERSE 2. Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

The use of the pronoun *this*, in the singular number, seems to confine this charge to Elihu. But if it were directed to him, Job and his friends could take it home themselves. Job confessed his ignorance of the cause of his great afflictions, so his words were without knowledge on this point. And his friends pretended to know that his afflictions proved him to be a hypocrite, which was darkening counsel.

14. It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

The speaker here is not Job, nor any man, but it is the Lord. It gives the first intimation of the earth's spherical form, and turning upon its axis, and that every place on it is its top, for men stand all around it, as our garments surround our body.

With the light of this passage, astronomers need not have been so long in learning the Copernican system of astronomy. There are hundreds of equally plain things in the Bible that men have not yet learned.

If professing Christians regarded the revealed word, there would not now be a hundred sects professing adherence and fidelity to it; neither would there be war among nations.

CHAPTER XL.

VERSE 4. Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee?

When God draws near in manifestations of majesty or grace, the impurities of good men become sensibly stirred within them, so that their vileness becomes painful. When a messenger was sent from heaven to the prophet Daniel, his strength and his

comeliness were turned, one to weakness, and the other to corruption. Dan. x. 8.

This vileness was no new discovery to Job, though it was deepened by the presence of God; for he professed it in the early part of his trials, saying, "I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?" vii. 20. A pious man, from a deep sense of divine things, the greatness and the holiness of God, his own unworthiness and the greatness of his guilt, lies in the dust before God. This piety led Job to exclaim, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer? I will lay my hand upon my mouth, or be silent: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." How kindly has our Father shown us what true piety is. There is no other that can endure the scrutiny of the great day.

14. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

If any sinner will do what is recited in the five preceding verses, then indeed he might effect something himself toward his own salvation. But as he can not, it is evident that he is helpless, undone, lost. The infinite grace and power of God only can save him. The poor lost sinner must look to God in Christ, and to the power of the Holy Spirit to do for him what he can not do for himself, seeing he can not forgive his sins, nor adopt himself into the family of God's redeemed children, nor give himself either repentance or faith. He must perish unless God do these things for him and in him.

Salvation is a wonderful, a mighty work prepared by the Infinite Savior, and when bestowed upon a lost sinner, it is bestowed by that mighty power of God that he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. Eph. i. 19. John vi. 65; xv. 5.

CHAPTER XLII.

VERSE 3. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?

Job seems to quote the former interrogatory to reply to it, and says, "Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not: things too wonderful for me, which I know not." Man-kind were not favored with a written revelation in the days of Job, as we are, but had revelation by the patriarchs, and were

not acquainted with the Mosaic ritual, and yet they were bound to know the truth and to obey it.

Revelation does not create our obligation to truth and duty, but only enhance it. Luke xii. 47, 48. John xv. 22. Rom. v. 20; ii. 5, 6, 12.

No man has a right either to do wrong or to believe wrong. If the blind lead the blind both shall fall. Their blindness will not save them. He that did not know his master's will must be beaten, condemned, although he will have less punishment. He loved sin well enough to choose and do it. For this he is condemned. But he has not the aggravation of despising the commandment by disobeying. It is written, "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Rom. vii. 13.

Uttering things too high for his understanding was a fault, as it proved the lowness and inadequacy of his conceptions, as a proof of his fallen and depraved nature.

PSALMS.



PSALM I.

VERSE 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

The pious man is blessed because he is pious. His piety leads him to let his light shine. Therefore he neither adopts the maxims of the wicked, nor walks in their ways, nor chooses their company.

As evil communications corrupt good manners, he is blessed in avoiding the evil contagions of their society, as well as in preserving communion with God.

2. But his delight is in the law of the Lord.

Every man's mind must take some direction. He must be occupied. His hopes must be fed and cherished. And the character of his exercises depends upon the state of his soul—the state of his heart; for a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.

It seems, then, that it need not be difficult for a man either to know himself or his neighbors. Accordingly, the Lord said, "By their fruits shall ye know them." If a man have not the light of evangelical life, he can not have it shining in him. If he have it, it must be operative: it must shine: else there can be no life in his piety.



PSALM II.

VERSE 1. Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The heathen—when God was calling his children out of Egypt. And they raged again when he was planting them in

Canaan. They raged all the time he was maintaining them as a beacon of light among the nations even to the end of their dispensation. They raged again when he sent his Son into the world to be for a light and salvation to his people, and to be a blessing to all nations. And again they raged when he established the gospel dispensation by the ministry of the apostles and evangelists.

The people at every stage of his benevolent and gracious work fought against him. Why did they do so? Because he and his work were good, and they were evil. Cain raged against his brother, and slew him. And why? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Dreadful—dreadful must be the result of this sacrilegious and ungodly war.

Why did they thus imagine so vain a thing? Could they imagine that they could defeat the counsels of the Most High? If they could, would this fallen world be better without the kingdom of God than with it? Better without the kingdom of righteousness, peace and salvation than with it? They will not prevent God's good purposes; but they only destroy themselves in the attempt.

7. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

How few persons who read this passage understand that it is a prophecy—a divine decree. How many have darkened their minds, by not observing the fact that it was prospective; and is called a decree; that very day it was in his settled and unchangeable purpose to bring forth the Messiah, or raise him up, and constitute him the Savior, by uniting the Godhead and the manhood in one person.

In accordance with this divine decree, hundreds of years afterward, the Holy Ghost came upon Mary to cause the conception of the Messiah. And the angel that spake to her, made it yet future, that holy thing that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. He was not yet begotten, nor born; but was just about to be begotten. It is common with the inspired writers to speak of things that are yet future, as already past.

And it is expressly so stated. God speaks of things that be not, as though they were. Rom. iv. 17.

That it was in the decree, and future, is proved again, by what is said of the resurrection of Christ, about the fulfillment of this very passage. See Acts xiii. 32, 33. Rom. i. 4.

8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.

This is connected with the prophecy of the second verse, as a part of the decree, and is likewise prospective; and was to be fulfilled in connection with it.

11. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

The perfections of Jehovah, and his great and wonderful works, with the tenderness of his love and the riches of his grace, should lead us to consecrate ourselves and our service to God. And while we rejoice in grace and salvation, we should tremble before the awful Majesty in whose sight is all our vileness, and in whose hand is all our destiny. While he abhors us for our sins, he is having mercy upon our souls, purchasing salvation for the ungodly, to pluck them as brands from the burning, to place them in heavenly seats, and to make them kings and priests unto God and the Lamb. Ps. xviii. Dan. x. 7, 8.

PSALM XI.

VERSE 7. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

As God is infinitely righteous, he must consequently love piety, and hate sin. His countenance will be favorable toward the upright, the penitent, the believing. The passage seems to be intended to encourage his creatures; and to excite them to holiness of heart and life. Abel offered sacrifice in pious faith, and God had respect both to him and his offering. Enoch walked with God, and was translated to heaven. Abraham believed and obeyed God, and offered up his only son. God was pleased, and blessed him. Gen. xxii. 16.

The pious and believing children of God are pleasing to him as far as they walk in faith. But the unbelieving can not be pleasing to him; for it is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

But this favorable countenance of God to the pious believer is vouchsafed through grace in and through Christ, to those who are in themselves deficient, unworthy, and ill-deserving. Taking them as persons and characters, they have so much

deficiency and remaining ungodliness, that they would appear only vile, were it not that they being in Christ by faith, and clothed with his righteousness, are loved and accepted for his righteousness alone. The pious passages of their lives are so few, so deficient and so imperfect, that they feel their guilt, their vileness and ill-desert, they constantly have to apply to Christ for salvation. Their righteousness deserves no favor—has no merit. And yet through grace they will be rewarded for piety. Every pious act or deed will be rewarded with some blessing, some good, or some token of favor purchased by Christ. But no Christian will be saved by his pious deeds. They have no influence in raising him to heaven. That is purchased alone by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

He that has ever sinned merits, and richly deserves eternal death; as it is written, "He that offends in one point, is guilty of all," or is altogether condemned as if he were only evil. Jas. ii. 10. He that has ever committed one sin at any time is without any merit, or any desert of good, and only deserves everlasting death. The believer will be fully and abundantly justified and saved through the full and adequate atonement and righteousness of Christ, and will be as fully and as freely saved as if he had never sinned, being hid and embraced in Christ.

PSALM XIV.

VERSE 2. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

"*The children of men*" must here be restricted to the unregenerate, as opposed to the regenerate or the children of God, who did seek him.

A similar instance is found in Gen. vi. 2, where the sons of God, and the daughters of men, are used to designate the unregenerate. Ps. liii. 2, 3.

PSALM XIX.

VERSE 12. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

The deceitfulness of man's heart, and the darkness of mind occasioned by it, prevent even the best of men from perceiving the full amount of their depravity, and their sins which lurk within them; so that it is not in man to understand his errors or to know himself deeply. Jer. xvii. 9. He can not to-day remember one sin of a thousand that he has committed, and when committing them he did not observe, perhaps, more of them than one of a thousand. If we must give account to God for every idle word, and for every unclean and unhallowed thought; if we are bound to be perfect even as God is perfect, if whatsoever is not of faith is sin, and if we must love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, we can not understand our errors, and we may well pray, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

If we can not now appreciate our guilt, then we can not know how much we need the atoning blood of him who died to save sinners; and can not know how much we need the robes of his righteousness, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear.

PSALM XXV.

VERSE 11. For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

When the Holy Spirit takes up his abode in a fallen soul he convinces it of sin; for he brings light with him, which discovers much pollution, which before was not imagined; so that that soul is confounded, sin revives, and it dies. He gives up all his confidence in himself, all hope of his escape from perdition by his own strength or means. Rom. vii. 9.

12. What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

Filial fear and reverence and humility make a part of the good man's piety. Prov. xvi. 6. This filial fear is the beginning of wisdom, and is a distinguishing grace in the new man. He stands in awe of the Holy One who is a consuming fire. He fears him who is able to destroy both soul and body, and to

cast into hell. He fears the temptations around him, and the deceitfulness of his own poor heart; for he knows what is written, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;" so that he can not at all times detect its deceitful machinations; and he fears with the apostle lest at last he shall be cast away. He also fears the great God, because he is holy, and searches the heart, and will by no means clear the guilty. This is the wayfaring man whom God will guide. John vii. 17.

PSALM XXVII.

VERSE 12. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies.

The nations around Israel were bitter enemies to David, and to Israel. The Lord is the portion of his people; and they trust in him alone as their support and their defense. The Lord God is a sun and a shield; the name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

The God in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways, holds in his hand the life, the breath, and the destiny of every creature. No evil can approach to any only as He will. He can effectually guard any one from all the machinations of enemies. He promised Israel, that when they left their homes to attend the annual festivals of their nation, the evil nations around them should not desire or covet their possessions—should not make any attack upon them.

David prayed the Lord to protect him from the shrewd counsels of Ahithophel. It is written, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, and as the rivers of water he turneth it whithersoever he will."

All the graces of the Christian's soul are likewise dependent upon the nurturing influence of the Divine Spirit; therefore he will watch unto prayer, and live in communion with God; for he lives in him, and by him. Ps. xxv. 20.

PSALM XXXIV.

VERSE 1. I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

If the heart be right with God, praise to him will be contin-

ually rising from the heart; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

2. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

The humble and pious soul will have all her joy, hope and trust in the Lord. All her expectation is from him and his grace. Ps. iv. 7. While the Christian feels bitterly his sinfulness, the prevailing exercise of his soul is the triumph of hope, and the joy of redemption by the blood of Christ; and he cries, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Rom. viii. 34, 37.

4. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and he delivered me from all my fears.

Although the triumph of hope is the prevailing state of the pious soul, yet he trembles with a sense of guilt, and desert of death. One leads to and excites and quickens the other grace, and they both bring him to the footstool, and there the Lord hears him for Christ's sake, pours the oil of consolation into his soul, and delivers him from all his fears.

7. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Although the Lord can work without intervening agents; yet in his infinite wisdom and goodness, he employs such agents, and gives them the high enjoyment of co-operating with him in the delightful work of mingling their voluntary agency in those benevolent and righteous schemes in promoting his kingdom, and training the saints for glory. He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire. They are sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation. The law also was received by the ministration of angels, whose happiness was increased by co-working in the glorious enterprise.

The prophet Isaiah gives us a parallel passage: To this man will I look, who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.

Such reverential awe and fear are the exercises of God's children. And these exercises are essential both to their piety and their security.

PSALM XXXV.

VERSE 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

He was so deeply engaged for the relief of his enemies, that he used fasting with prayer to prevail for them. But as they did not reciprocate any of his kind feelings, his prayer for them was not heard; but came back with blessings upon him.

PSALM XXXVI.

VERSE 7. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

The great work of regeneration makes a great change in the mind of a man. Eph. i. 19. 2 Cor. v. 17. The unregenerate sinner has no such evangelical sentiment. 2 Cor. ii. 14. He has no proper sense of divine things, neither can he have: he is besotted in sin. But the child of God is humbled and enlightened; for light and humility are both necessary to enable him to appreciate, even in a small degree, the loving-kindness of God, who though he be high, and greatly incensed against sinners, Ps. vii. 11; yet he condescends to show mercy to them in the gospel. Such grace appears wonderful and amazing to the enlightened and humbled soul; so that he is encouraged to trust and hope in him, as the unbeliever can not do only in that presumption which, at times, characterizes the hard heart.

PSALM XXXVII.

VERSE 11. But the meek shall inherit the earth: and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

No one can be a Christian without possessing and exercising the Christian graces. Meekness is ever an attendant, and an avidence of piety. "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly

in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. xi. 29.

Meekness is the opposite of pride, haughtiness and revenge. Pride is always a polluting and debasing sin. The meek are gentle, harmless and lamblike. It is written, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "God will beautify the meek with salvation." Ps. cxlix. 4. "The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord." Isa. xxix. 19. And the same prophet said, "That Christ was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek." lxi. 1. If they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing, then they will inherit the earth, enjoy it, abound in the blessings of it, enjoy every worldly blessing that they need, have all that would be good for them, and shall be delighted with the abundance of peace.

23. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

The translators have supplied the word *good* to this passage; but not without propriety, because the second clause requires it. The first clause had been true without it, for it is true that the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord. The steps of the good are ordered by the Lord directly to his glory; but those of the wicked indirectly. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Ps. xli. 1-3; lxxvi. 10.

24. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

How rich is the inheritance of the saints! Surely the covenant in which they are embraced, is well ordered in all things and sure. The Lord will preserve them that are his by regeneration, sanctification and adoption.

This must appear to be amazing grace to the poor and humble believer, who knowing his short-comings, wonders at that paternal faithfulness that will not let him utterly fall and perish. He falls often, in a degree, but he never will be suffered to apostatize nor lose his faith.

The prophet Jonah fell from faithfulness when he fled to Tarshish, as he thought from the presence of the Lord, was cast into the sea and sank to the bottom, was taken by a whale and retained in its bowels until the third day. Yet he was held up, stood again on land and sang the praises of his Deliverer.

If there were not provision in the covenant of redemption for the final perseverance of saints, they could have no hope of salvation; because they are deeply sensible of their own weakness, fallibility and helplessness; knowing that they are

not sufficient of themselves to think anything of themselves; and knowing that without their Lord's hand and strength they can do nothing. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xv. 5.

The saints should continually abound in thanks and praise to him who will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that they may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. x. 13. John iii. 15, 16, 36; v. 24; vi. 40. Job xvii. 9. Ps. xxxvii. 39, 40; cxlv. 14. Judas, Abithophel and Absalom were not so upheld; for like king Saul they were not saints.

PSALM LI.

VERSE 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

As actions proceed from the heart, which is only evil until sanctified by the Divine Spirit, the child of God prays for a good heart, a right spirit, that he may bring forth the fruits of obedience, and let his light shine before men. This is so entirely in the divine hand that it is here called *create*, in the sense of work in me, or produce in me. For in our day *create* means the production of some new thing, either from nothing or from another material. The translators do not always use words in their most literal sense. See Ps. liii. 4. Acts xx. 28.

PSALM LIII.

VERSE 4. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

It proves the want of knowledge when the wicked persecute and destroy the children of God. They ought to wish that they were tenfold more numerous than they are, to let the light of their pious lives shine in the world, and to unite their fervant prayers for the showers of divine grace to convict and convert sinners; for who would not be glad of such grace that he might be saved? If he would not be glad of it he has no knowledge. If he destroys Christians he destroys the hopeful means of his salvation.

They lack wisdom, but being ignorant, have not called upon God to obtain it. Jas. i. 5. Ps. xiv. 4.

PSALM LV.

VERSE 23. But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

While the Lord will not suffer the righteous to be moved, as is declared in the preceding verse, and while the wicked may live for a time, yet bloody and deceitful men, those abandoned in wickedness, will generally come to an untimely end, often in the morning of youth. Wicked men die in quarrels or upon the gallows before they have half completed the years of their natural life of threescore and ten, which has been set as a common limit to old age. If by their wickedness they come to their end before they attain to thirty-five years, then the declaration of the Psalmist is true, is verified.

It is not right to wrest the scriptures to involve them in absurdity. The Psalmist does not say that they shall not live out half the days it was decreed for them to live. If he had said so he would have erred. He only declared a plain and obvious fact, that men's wickedness often brings them to an untimely end, and before they have lived out half their threescore and ten. Ps. xc. 10. As every one knows that many die in infancy and in youth, and in middle age, and that some attain to more than a hundred years, we are all furnished with the above safe rule for the interpretation of all such passages. Setting old age to seventy years did not hinder this variety, nor prevent the effect of natural causes. Jesus, John the Baptist and Stephen without shedding blood died before thirty-five; while some wicked men live to the age of a hundred years. This passage is neither a divine law, nor a divine decree, but a mere remark, a mere observation upon the fact that wickedness often brings its perpetrators to an untimely death. Many other passages are capable of the same perversion. Exod. xx. 12. Deut. iv. 26, 40; vi. 2, 15; xxii. 7; xxxii. 47. Ps. lxi. 6; cii. 23, 24. Prov. x. 27; xxviii. 16. Eccl. viii. 12, 13. Isa. xxxviii. 5, 10. Ps. lxxix. 11. This passage affords no argument against divine decrees and predestination. If it did it would afford the same argument against the truth of the scriptures, which abound with the evidence of predestination and decrees. Every event that takes place in the world or out of it, can not but be fixed in the divine mind. He must foreknow it, and he must bring it to pass or it could not occur, for it is written: "In whom also we

have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Eph. i. 11.

It is also written, "That the hairs of our heads are all numbered; and that a sparrow does not fall to the ground without your Father putting it down." Owing to the dullness of fallen man he can not comprehend that predestination and the use of means are entirely consistent. But this dullness can not prevent the truth, that although the number of every man's days is fixed to a certainty, yet the wicked and the righteous may be cut off in the midst of their days, or in the morning of life. Not in the midst of the days that it was decreed or appointed that they as individuals should live, but in the midst of the days of man's natural life of threescore and ten years, agreeably to this declaration of the Psalmist.

Job confirms this doctrine that a man's days are fixed: "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he can not pass." xiv. 5. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." xiv. 14.

In fixing every man's days, God knowing what it would be right to do, and what he would wish to do with every individual, fixed the number of every man's days accordingly, even before he created the world; so that when the Lord Jesus and the martyr Stephen were cut off in the morning of life, no more was done than was appointed for them before the world was. His decrees and his administration are, therefore, in perfect harmony.

There is, therefore, just the same necessity for a man to eat and drink, to take medicine, to hasten out of a burning house or a sinking ship, to put out fire, to build, to plant and to flee from the wrath to come, to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near, and to strive to enter in at the strait gate, as there would be if there were no decrees, no predestination.

If the unbeliever can not understand how this can be, it is well: he need not try; for he can not comprehend God, who is always doing works which are above the comprehension of men and angels. Decrees do not control divine works nor hinder him from doing anything. He always does what is right, and that which is right now to do is just what he has decreed to do.

Well might the Psalmist sing, "In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me." lvi. 11. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved." Ps. lxvi. 8, 9.

PSALM LIX.

VERSE 3. For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord.

Job was conscious that his afflictions were not sent upon him for any special criminality. Job xvi. 17. The persecution of good men is for their righteousness and for their good, and not for their crimes, but for discipline. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Abel was put to death for his piety. As all have sinned, all must die; they are all under the sentence of death, are justly liable to death at any hour, because they are sinners. Heb. xii. 6-11. Ps. lxix. 4. 1 Sam. xxiv. 8-17. But sometimes the afflictions of pious men are for their sins. Deut. iii. 25-27. 2 Sam xii. 10.

PSALM LXXIII.

VERSE 22. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

As sin renders us vile and filthy, the pious are made sensible of it, for they have need of this conviction to cultivate humility, meekness and repentance. The doctrines of the scriptures are necessary to nourish Christian graces, and thus to promote salvation. A soul can not be saved in heresy, because it can not sanctify him and fit him for salvation. It is therefore called damnable heresy. 2 Pet. ii. 1. John xvii. 17.

PSALM LXXVI.

VERSE 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

When our translation was made there was not that distinction between the words shall and will which has since obtained. The wrath of man, or the wickedness of man that would not be overruled to promote his benevolent purposes,

he will prevent, he will not allow it to take place, be acted out. The infinite goodness of God is security that he does all things well. It also appears that he holds control over the whole universe and every thing in it.

He saw how evil could be overruled to promote the greater good of the universe, or it would not have been admitted

If he saw that its admission would thus insure the highest good, then it was both wise and good to admit it. If under these circumstances it had not been admitted, then it must seem that the highest good had not been consulted.

The same perfections which led to its introduction must also lead him to its entire control, and must insure that no more will be allowed than is sufficient for the object.

The wicked man is as completely under divine bounding and control as is the good man. But the kind of control is different; one being by good spirits and the other by evil spirits. Even unregenerate men in common circumstances of comfort and composure are under the influence of good spirits, as was king Saul before he become reckless. 1 Sam. xvi. 14. And when He sees cause He sends evil spirits upon such unregenerate men by which they are afflicted. 1 Sam. xviii. 10; xix. 9. 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23. Judges ix. 23. Deut. ii. 30. Exod. iv. 21. Ps. lxxviii. 49. And as the apostle said of some, "whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

In how many ways could Cain have been prevented from killing Abel? He might have been regenerated and made to love his brother. He might have died in childhood, or been taken with a disease, or warned in a dream as Laban was, Gen. xxxi. 29; or he might have been terrified by a light from heaven as was Saul of Tarsus. In many ways he might easily have been prevented from killing his brother, and his wrath restrained if such had been good in God's view. If Cain had not done this deed we had not had this conclusive evidence of the early maturity of human depravity in the first generation.

By this doctrine of divine purpose and the divine control over evil, we can, as in a glass, see the good hand of God in all the wrath of man that is raging around us, or prevalent in other worlds, and that God holds it all under his control, to bound and restrain as he sees good. Gen. iv. 5, 7, 8; 1. 20.

PSALM LXXVII.

VERSE 17. The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound.

When the armies of Israel passed through the Red Sea, their march was accompanied by a storm of wind carrying a spray over the people and with thunder and rain. See note on 1 Cor. x. 2. The arrows of divine judgment by the flood of waters, slew the Egyptians and defended the Hebrews. As the waters bore up the ark and preserved Noah, so they overwhelmed and destroyed the wicked world.

 PSALM LXXXIII.

VERSE 8. Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot.

Assur was one of the tribes of Israel. It is important to remember that names are many times spelled in various ways while they stand for the same person. The people of Israel were surrounded with the Gentiles who generally were their implacable enemies. It is a severe trial to see our natural or avowed friends acting with our adversaries. In this instance Assur helped the cause of Ammon and Moab and the other heathens against Israel. The wounds which the Lord received were in the house of his friends. Herein they show whose side they are on, and what manner of spirit they are of. John says of traitors: "They went out from us. But they were not of us: for if they had been of us they would have continued with us: but they went out that it might be made manifest, that they were not all of us." They who love the church of God can neither forsake it nor oppose it. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem." Ps. cxxxvii. 5; lxxxiv. 7. Job xvii. 9.

PSALM CVI.

VERSE 23. Therefore he said, that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach to turn away his wrath.

The inspired writers frequently speak after the manner of men; as God hears and answers prayer, and blesses the various means used by us in both temporal and spiritual things, seems to be influenced by means, and even to turn from his purpose, as in this passage, and in adding fifteen years to Hezekiah's life, and in sparing Zoar for Lot. But in all such seeming changes he is only carrying out his fixed and eternal purposes without either variableness of shadow or turning.

One purpose for putting Moses over Israel was that he might pray for them, and earnestly intercede for them. He directed Job's friends to get Job to pray for them, lest the Lord should deal with them after their folly. Job prayed, and the judgment was averted, as it would not have been, if he had not prayed. This may appear as if their destiny was put in Job's power, so that, if he had not prayed for them, they had not escaped. Well there need be no doubt that results do depend on means—and effects upon causes; and that there are concatenations of causes and effects both in the natural and moral world extending through all time. And when God gives influence to any means making them effectual, it was always so intended by him; and when any means are ineffectual it is because it was always so intended. "Paul may plant and Apollos water; but God giveth the increase." "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." God holds the scepter in his own hand, and inserted the use of means, and of moral agency into this world's affairs, and will continue their use, however mysterious it may seem to us: and however it may seem to put divine government dependent on, and in subjection to creature influence. There is more wisdom in the works of God, more deep and unfathomable wisdom than can be conceived by angels or men. Things are, that seem as if they could not be. Rom. iv. 17. Creation from nothing seems to be a natural impossibility; yet an evident truth. So it is with the divine existence; it seems to be an impossibility, and a necessary truth.

However strange it may seem that although God works all things after the counsel of his own will, yet means are as necessary in his work, as they would be, if there were no decrees; for since he uses means and directs us to use them, no

one can pronounce them useless without irreverence. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Prov. xxiv. 34. "In the morning sow thy seed." Eccl. xi. 6; xii. 12. Prov. xxvii. 18; xxviii. 19; xxvi. 2.

Men may sow, and not reap, may run in the race, and not win; but if they do not sow nor run, then it is certain that they will neither reap nor win. Christians live in the constant use of means: they are not Antinomians; neither indeed can be. See comment on 1 Sam. xxiii. 11; xiii. 13.

PSALM CX.

VERSE 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

It is ever the day of God's power, when he will exercise power: when he will make men willing to receive the rich grace of salvation. There is a resplendent beauty in the holiness which imbues the graces that constitute the salvation of the gospel.

To this work the Mediator is furnished; for he has infinite perfections; and is always fully endowed and furnished, as with the freshness of the morning.

The Father addresses the Messiah concerning his mediatorial work, and promises him that his success and reward shall be satisfactory.

No lost sinner has been saved without this grace bowing his soul into meek submission; but as the great host of God's redeemed children were yet to be redeemed from the kingdom of darkness, and made subjects of grace, the promise is put in the future tense, "Thy people shall be willing."

This is spoken authoritatively and with certainty, "Thy people shall be willing." And they are called his people while as yet they were the children of the wicked one, because they were given to him in a covenant well ordered in all things and sure.

Although man is a free agent, and a responsible agent, yet he is not an independent agent; but is subject to divine control. Else his salvation would be hopeless and impossible. Although the philosophy of human accountability may defy our investigation, yet we know we act freely, and that we are accountable, and dependent; so that the promise could be

made that those given to the Son should be willing. It also appears to be the day of the Son's power, which is alluded to, suggesting his omnipotence, as a sufficient guarantee to the promise: they were not yet willing, but they should be willing. Rejoice, O sinner, in the glorious truth, that such a vast number of rebels will be turned to God, and made willing in the day of his power to serve the Lord, and be blest with salvation. How good it is for us that there is power and grace to make us willing. O that he would exercise it on every one, making all nations the subjects of his grace, willing obedient children. They are called Christ's people by the Psalmist, while their redemption was yet future. They were then his people by a covenant made in eternity, before all worlds. They are those whom he purchased at his death. Acts xx. 28. They were the Father's, in the order of nature, before they were given to the Son. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." John xvii. 6, 9. They were the Messiah's willing people prospectively by election, having their names written from the foundation of the world in the Lamb's book of life. Rev. xiii. 8; xvii. 8. Thus are proved the doctrines of grace, and the necessity of evangelical religion. John iii. 3. Luke xiii. 3.

PSALM CXV.

VERSE 3. But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

The Infinite Jehovah is necessarily incomprehensible to us, because he is infinite, and we are finite. He is always where we are, although we behold him not. But it seems that he must have some location to accommodate the heavenly hosts, who being finite need a local heaven for displays of divinity. If the Most High has always done what he pleased, and always will, then his bliss is complete: and if he will always be perfect in both wisdom and goodness, then the best good of the universe is secure.

PSALM CXIX.

VERSE 96. I have seen an end of all perfection : but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

Whoever is acquainted with the infinite perfections of God, and is sensible of our fallibility, and corruption, will, with the Psalmist, perceive an end of all human pretenses to perfection. "Be ye holy ; for I am holy." 1 Pet. i. 16. "He that offends in one point is guilty of all." Jas. ii. 10. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48. These passages show that perfection is impossible to fallen man. As the perfections of the divine nature show the impossibility of our attaining to exemption from sin, by attaining to the perfection of God, the perfection of the divine law must show the same doctrine to be in harmony with the divine perfections. As it was breadth or strictness of the divine law or commandment, that put an end to the Psalmist's hopes of perfection, the translators erred in supplying the particle *but*. They need not have supplied any word ; but if they supplied any it should have been *for*, which would have retained the sentiment of the passage. The commandment was so exceedingly broad, that it showed our imperfections. Rom. vii. 13.

The unattainableness of perfection will only lead the humble and submissive soul to more watchfulness, more prayer, humility, repentance and faith. He will draw near to Jesus the Lord, and feel His preciousness.

That perfection is unattainable does not affect our hope of salvation by Christ, who is all our righteousness, and an ample and sufficient righteousness. A Christian can not live one minute, nor one second with such pure and holy thoughts and affections as an holy angel does. But the righteousness of the Lord of life is sufficient.

PSALM CXLV.

VERSE 9. The Lord is good to all : and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Whoever will understand the scriptures must compare various places together, and learn how to understand and explain them : and thus let scripture interpret scripture. Ps. ii. 7, is explained by Acts xiii. 33, and Luke i. 35. Otherwise its ex

position might be difficult. Gen. vi. 6 is interpreted by Jer. xviii. 10; for as God's repentance applies to good, it shows that his repentance is not like ours, but is of a peculiar kind, and applies only to our repentance, in the change of conduct connected with it. We repent in regretting, disapproving, and changing our course: and he repents by only changing his course, as he always intended to do; which makes it consistent with immutability. He is over all his works with all his perfections, with infinite justice as well as mercy.

Of a generation of Israel it was said to the prophet, "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me; for I will not hear thee." Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14. "Therefore said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them; but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by pestilence." Jer. xiv. 11, 12. As these declarations are in harmony with all revelation, we learn the general rule of interpretation to be, that God being infinite in mercy as in all his attributes, he is ever inclined to the exercise of mercy, as far as is consistent with his wisdom, his justice and his faithfulness; but when mercy would be against the good of his kingdom, and the glory of his justice, he will withhold it.

It is therefore consistent to interpret this passage as being in harmony with the truth, that salvation will not be extended to any fallen angels, nor to all fallen men; but he has mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. Rom. ix. 18. Isa. xxvii. 11.

The Infinite One has other attributes besides mercy; and he will perfectly conserve his whole character. If mercy has been denominated his darling attribute, it was an error without any authority. He is declared to be a just and a righteous God. If any attribute is more valuable than another, we may well conclude that it is justice. It is so among men. And the gospel shows that it is so in the divine economy, else Christ need not have suffered and died. It is so in human jurisprudence, else every criminal would be let go. The perfection of divine mercy can no more save all sinners, than the perfection of the attribute of divine justice can destroy them all.

If mercy be the darling attribute, then if a man should send me with a thousand dollars to pay a debt he owed, and I give it all to the poor on the way, I should be censured for unfaithfulness and dishonesty: mercy would not excuse my perfidy.

The Psalmist was right when he besought the Lord, "Be not merciful to any wicked transgressors." And revelation informs us that divine justice is so immaculate that it will by no means clear the guilty. Ps. lix. 5.

This passage then clearly teaches that the divine attribute of mercy is so perfect—so infinite, that the Most High is ever inclined to exercise mercy to every moral agent in the universe, if wisdom and goodness would admit of it: there is an inclination toward mercy to every creature; and an actual exercise of it, as far as it is right.

Judas enjoyed life, breath, health, food and raiment, with gospel privileges, and nearness of relation to the ministrations of the Lord. Pharaoh shared largely in mercies, in his crown, his scepter, the ministrations of Moses, and light from heaven, and enjoyed forty years of divine forbearance in life.

Where is the sinner that does not enjoy his thousand daily mercies? Truly God is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.

PROVERBS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 5. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning.

He who makes it a point to learn from every one that can teach him, will constantly be gaining useful knowledge, and storing up a treasure of wisdom; while an ignorant man is generally proud and arrogant, as well as ignorant, and therefore scorns instruction.

32. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

Those who are heedless of danger, or negligent of improving privileges, are simple or unwise; and they too often incur an infinite loss, even the loss of their souls. When eternity is considered, it seems impossible that reasonable creatures can so trifle with it.

Even the rich, the prosperous and the noble, being lifted up with pride, or elated with prosperity, turn the bounties of Providence that should have excited humility, gratitude and repentance, into a snare and a curse to their souls. They have not the discretion of Agur, who prayed, "Give me not riches, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord." Prov. xxx. 8. The light of eternity may show, that, for the most part, the class who were not rich are better off than those who had been.

It is not without reason that those who are thus perverted by wealth are termed fools. Anxiety for wealth is, itself, idolatry; and if it leads to the loss of the soul, must be the greatest folly, for no man can serve two masters—we can not serve God and mammon.

CHAPTER II.

VERSES 2, 4, 5. So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find knowledge of God.

Sinners seek wisdom without finding it, and knowledge without obtaining it. The reason is, they do not seek it right; they seek from necessity, or from self-love, and not from the intrinsic value of the object, from love to God and holiness. They depend on works or doings, a moral life, a profession of religion or morality, or satisfy themselves with the fact of having used means or made exertions, although all their works and means were cold and heartless; they did not seek as for a precious treasure. If they sought for them with their heart set upon them, as they seek for worldly treasure, they might be successful.

13. Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness.

In scripture style, a man is said to leave the paths of uprightness who never was in them, but who leaves them in the sense of choosing another in preference to them, leaves them by not taking them, not choosing them. Whatever may be the cause of any one leaving the paths of uprightness, he will surely be in the paths of darkness, stumbling upon the dark mountains. 1 John ii. 19.

All who thus seem to apostatize, seem to fall from grace; like king Saul and Judas, who were only hypocrites. Job xvii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 5. John v. 24.

There are cases of persons walking for a time in the paths of moral virtue without any piety of heart, having only outside goodness. Matt. xiii. 21.

Some who professed to believe in justification by faith, are said to be fallen from grace, because they had fallen from the profession of it. Gal. v. 4.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 12. Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Benevolence or charity leads its votaries to gentleness, kindness, charity. He who is given to strife and contention shows malevolence. Prov. xix. 11. 1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 11. Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

Heedless men are not aware how well they are known and read by others. They do not consider that if they do not let their light shine, they will manifest something else in its room. It is difficult for any one to prevent his real character from being known.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 30. There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.

There is none that can succeed. There is much that is aimed and directed against him, but it is all vain and imbecile, for there is no power but that of God. John xix. 11.

ECCLESIASTES.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 16. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool.

How humiliating the thought, that nearly all the incidents of a man's life will be lost and unknown in eternity, as if they had never been, except the moral record that they have left. How must it reflect his nothingness, that not one of a thousand of these incidents will survive him, as his stature, his features and the hourly events that make up his life. And yet much more of the events of Solomon's are retained by posterity, than of one of his servants. Every figure of rhetoric is used in the scriptures, as metonome, hyperbole, comparison, metaphor and parable. Consequently many things in revelation are not to be construed literally. John vii. 38.

This creates no difficulty in understanding revelation, for frequently what is said is not what is revealed, but what is meant is what is revealed. It is common in the scriptures to only suggest a subject or allude to it, and leave the reader to exercise common sense in fixing the meaning to it. John iii. 32; v. 31; vi. 41, 50, 51, 53. Humility, candor and honesty are indispensable in interpreting the Sacred Word.

The proverb interprets itself by referring to the fact of the oblivion that shall cover the common occurrences of a man's life, and the fact that a wise man must die as well as the fool.

The correctness of this rule of interpretation appears also in the following quotations: "Thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass." Isa. xlviii. 4. Matt. xxvi. 26. "They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron." Jer. vi. 28. "The heavens over thy head shall be brass." Deut. xxviii. 23. "Arise, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thine hoofs brass." Micah iv. 13. "I said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High." Ps. lxxxii. 6. "The Lord is a man of war." Exod. xv. 3. "But ye have an

unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." 1 John ii. 20. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii. 2. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." John ii. 19. "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." John xi. 11. Matt. ix. 24. John vi. 35; xi. 26.

So important is this rule, that, without it, no one can understand the scriptures, nor believe them unto salvation. Eccl. i. 11; iii. 19. A man has no pre-eminence above a beast as to liability to death. Eccl. iii. 18.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 18. I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.

In the secret musings of his mind the wise man looked upon the state of man in this world as a state of probation, in which they are to manifest their heart and their true character, and thus prepare for the day of judgment. Every day is filling their cup, finishing out their character. They will not go to judgment until they shall have exhibited their character, and are thus made ready; for they are to be judged by their works done here in the body.

How easily and how clearly might every one see and know his own character which is being thus daily manifested. Does he love God? Does he serve God? Does he always fear the Lord so as not to dare to transgress? Does he love his neighbor as himself? Does he do justly, love mercy, and walk uprightly before God? Does he love the scriptures, and walk by them as his rule of life? If he does not see his real character, it may be that his neighbors see it in many points, if not in all, and it is all plainly written in God's book. Matt. xxiii. 32.

21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth?

No man can know much about the soul or spirit of either man or beast. We know that both man and beast have two natures, a physical and a spiritual nature. The wise man calls both by the same name—spirit. We know also that the one is eternal, and that the other perishes with the body at

death, for this is what the passage declares. We are also taught that our souls fell in Adam when he fell, and that we inherit his depravity dying in him. If our souls died in Adam, then they were in him when he fell, and have not been created since. For if they had been created since, then they were not in him at the fall, and could not fall nor die in him, nor be subject to the imputation of his sin. But we were in him, as it is written: "In Adam all die, and Levi was in his father's loins when Melchizedek met Abraham;" so that we understand this subject clearly on these points because they are revealed.

If the souls of Adam's posterity are created as they come into the world, and since the fall, they must come into the world holy and free from any contamination, as they come from his hand who created them. If they are now depraved, they have fallen since he fell, and are independently guilty, and their fall being independent of his they are not included in the covenant of grace with him in the second Adam; as they did not die in the first Adam they can not be made alive in the second, and can have no part in the salvation of the gospel. The whole human race constitute one family, one race, and if God so pleased, he could have made Adam so a federal head of the race that the whole in their probation should stand or fall together in Adam, just as all who are Christ's stand together in him. If imputation is unrighteous, as infidels say, then we can no more be saved by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, than we can be condemned for Adam's sin. If one is unjust so also must be the other.

There is no reason nor theology in supposing that these newly created souls died and fell by being placed in a depraved body, for a body being as a lump of clay can not have inherent sinfulness, moral depravity not being predicable of matter, which can neither love nor hate, any more than can the stones or the trees. Sin can be a quality only of the soul. If there be anything even seemingly allied to malevolence in the brute, it must belong to his soul or spirit, and is accounted for by the fall which brought a curse upon the ground for man's sake. Adam was the head of this world and his curse fell upon it. Gen. iii. 17. There could be no moral depravity in the material world, for sin being a moral quality is predicable only of a moral nature.

Angels are capable of sin or holiness without bodies, but bodies without souls are not capable of either. Jas. ii. 26. It is therefore a solecism to impute to the body the contamination of the newly created soul.

Sin consists in thought, feeling, action and the moral nature;

but as matter can not think, feel, act nor have a moral nature, sin can not be predicable of it.

Sin can not be predicable of the body only as imputatively, as the servant, the ally, the partner of the soul (for the soul and the body constitute only one person), so the wives' children, and stock of Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up together, and for the sin only of the mutineers. Num. xvi. 32, 33. Sin can have no original adherence to the body. See Gen. v. 3. Jas. ii. 26.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1. Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil.

Reverence for God, and love to divine things will lead a pious man to approach the house of God with awe, and with a deep sense of his responsibility, remembering that it is written: "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," and, "Behold I am vile;" and, "To whom much is given of him shall much be required." To go to the house of God as the horse rushes into the battle, is sinful and unprofitable; for our religious privileges must be either a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. 2 Cor. ii. 16. To keep thy foot is to let nothing divert your thoughts from divine things on the way nor while there, nor in returning, but to preserve a prayerful frame, and be employed in devout meditation. Rev. Asabel Nettleton walked to the house of God alone, that nothing might interrupt his meditations. The Psalmist said, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise." Ps. c. 4.

It better comports with humility to be anxious rather to learn than to teach.

10. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.

The reason why silver will not satisfy him that loveth it, is that the love of silver is a passion, a moral disease of the heart; and is without any foundation in reason: and therefore the acquisition of it does not remove the craving passion; the same eager desire remains in the heart. The only remedy is to get a better heart, by having it turned to better objects, even

heavenly and eternal, not loving the world, nor the things of the world, but loving God and divine things, and by faith leaning upon him and looking to him who feedeth both the ravens and the poor; and enlist the soul in the more important and more reasonable employment of serving God, doing good, and laying up treasure in heaven.

As no one can serve two masters when the heart is engaged in divine things, it will be withdrawn from every worldly and carnal object.

15. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came.

As every man comes into the world naked and destitute, so shall he at death go out of the world as destitute of property as he came into it; even although he may have acquired much he must leave it all behind him.

16. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go.

In all points as to property or wealth, so shall he go. The inspired writer speaks to his subject only.

ISAIAH.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 10. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed centuries before this prophecy, in the days of Abraham; and they had never been rebuilt, for the places on which they had stood were now covered by the Dead Sea. This divine admonition is addressed to the people of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem. Such was the backsliding of the people that they deserved this reproach.

The rulers are here admonished to give attention to the messages sent to them from the King of kings. And rulers of nations, and especially of Christian nations, should make it their first, and their chief business to acquaint themselves thoroughly with divine revelation. Their own success in the government, and the interests of their people require it; more than all God commands it. And as it is written, "It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life," Deut. xxxii. 47, therefore God charged Israel, that their king should write for his own private use a copy of the divine law, study it, and walk by it. Deut. xvii., xviii., xix.

11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord.

Although God had instituted these sacrifices, he was not pleased with them. They lived the lives of wicked men, and no number of external ordinances could make any atonement, or give any satisfaction, unless they were attended with that deep sorrow that would lead them to reformation, and to works of holy living, and that would show their repentance to be genuine. In attending upon divine ordinances men need the Holy Spirit to enable them to offer acceptable service to God. In reading the scriptures, in conversation upon religious subjects, in the prayer-meeting, and at the eucharist, we displease the Lord, if we do not have the Holy Spirit to ena-

ble us to attend upon these duties in a penitent, humble, devout and believing manner.

The Lord commanded Balaam to go with the messengers of Balak ; but he was angry with him because he went. And it is written concerning that most solemn and precious of ordinances, that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself ; not discerning the Lord's body.

We may carefully procure a magnificent organ, procure an able organist, and yet be displeasing to God, and procure leanness of heart, while we are exulting in the service we are rendering to God.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

They supposed that God had required it. But they forgot that, if they did not come with their hearts, and offer reverent and devout worship to him, they were not doing what he required, neither what he would accept.

While a church may be exulting in glory over the splendor of their church and their performances, it may be that their exultation is from pride, and not devotion. "There is a way that seemeth right to a man ; but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. xiv. 12.

18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

We are vile ; and should be bowed always with humility and shame before the immaculate throne. For without such contrition, shame and humility we can not approach the pure, the high, and lofty throne of Emanuel.

What made the faith of the centurion so acceptable was his humble confidence in the Lord Jesus. He abhorred himself as vile and unworthy, so that he would not present himself to the Lord, but sent to him his request, and his confidence in the ability of the Lord to perform what he requested. Where there is such humility, such confidence, and such fervent desire, great blessings are obtained for the chief of sinners. Such is the fountain prepared, that great sinners can be washed entirely white and clean, and be welcomed to heaven.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 5. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable.

It was in judgment that those things were spoken. When iniquity abounds it is always a judgment upon the people; for it is written, "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" It is so with nations; for the Lord loves to bless both individuals and nations whose impiety does not stand in the way. "When judgments are abroad in the earth the people will learn righteousness, if they will consider and regard the hand of the Lord." v. 12.

10. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

What encouragement is here given to the pious in their afflictions; for they shall have their reward. Stores of good and glory are waiting for them. God hath spoken it. How well may they say with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." xxiv. 15.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1. Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill.

In view of the destiny the prophet raises a song of praise to the founder and builder of Zion. As the divine care, agency and grace are the strength, glory and hope of the church, she is on a hill of eminence. And the divine culture secures her fruitfulness.

If the church do not abound in holiness, devotion, purity and zeal, she is below her privileges, and unworthy of her high calling.

She should feel her obligation to honor Zion, by her teaching, by her use of the keys, and letting her light shine in all the beauties of holiness, purity, and devotion. v. 24.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes.

The prophet seems to be commanded to do what was beyond his power. But, although he could not execute these judgments, there were spiritual agents by whom they would be executed. 1 Sam. xvi. 14-16. 1 Kings xxii. 22. Evil spirits are ever ready and waiting for the privilege of executing divine judgments; and take pleasure in doing it. They mean it for evil, while the Lord intends it for good in displaying his righteousness, instructing the world, that the world may know that he is God. Jer. xvi. 21. Dan. iv. 25. Gen. i. 20.

We must take this rather as a prophecy, and not as a command to the prophet, just as we interpret the command to sinners to make themselves new hearts, not so much a command to create it, as instructing them in their need of it, and suggesting their need of seeking it of God, who alone can give it. And it is highly necessary for them to know it, that they seek until they get it from the mighty power of God, who alone can give it. Eph. i. 19, 20.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 1. And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

How unseemly it appears for the king of Israel and the king of Syria to be confederate against Judah, the church and kingdom of the Lord of Hosts. Should the king of Israel help the ungodly Syrians in a war to destroy the people of God? Nothing is too evil for an apostate people to do, who know, as Israel did, the divine law, and were circumcised as God's people, and who thus knowing apostatized from God, and from the holy commandments given them. No weapon formed against him can prosper. Prov. xxi. 30.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 9. Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries.

As the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, man is vain and impious when he depends altogether on means, and forgets the sovereign hand of Providence that ruleth over all. Because no preparation of means, be they apparently ever so formidable, can succeed unless the divine will and the divine hand co-operate in the enterprise. Ps. cxxvii. 1.

20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Those who teach or act according to their own will, their own imagination, their own reason, or their own conscience, and are not sustained by the divine word, are ignorant of their duty to God, and to themselves; and in danger of being left of God in darkness as judgment for their presumption—for being wise in their own conceit. Prov. ii. 1, 12, 13. John x. 27. 1 John ii. 4, 5, 14, 21, 24. John xiv. 15, 21, 23, 24.

Being blessed with a revelation from heaven we must walk by its precious light. We may not walk by our own unsanctified reason, substituting it in the room of the divine word, else we show that we are not of God. Isa. ix. 16.

When women take an active part in public worship, when God commands them to be in silence, 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12, they betray themselves; and show that they condemn God. Ps. x. 13. So do all those who encourage it or connive at it; for God is not mocked.

So do men and women in wearing each other's garments, or imitating them. It proves the corruption of the age, the perversion of their hearts. It is written, "All that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God." The dreadful corruption of this generation appears in women in bloomery, and in men in shawls. Deut. xxii. 5. He who does not maintain the doctrines of grace, as they are taught in the word, when called to speak of them, is destitute of light, and of the fear of God. He who loves and fears God, can not contradict his word, nor pretend to be wiser than he.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 7. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

A man's actions may be in agreement with the divine will or the divine commandment; and yet they may be perfectly sinful if they proceed from a bad heart or a wrong motive. Hence Balaam sinned in obeying the divine command to go with Balak's messengers. Num. xxii. 20, 21, 22, 35. This is the reason why the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord. Prov. xv. 8; xxi. 27. Ps. lxxviii. 34-37. Matt. xv. 8. Jer. xvii. 10. Rom. x. 10.

We may there see the necessity of the grace of the Holy Spirit, in order to render any exercise of fallen man, holy. Thus the Trinity is constantly necessary to us, the Spirit to sanctify us and direct our thoughts and our hearts, the Son to furnish a righteousness for us and to intercede for us, and the grace of the Father to accept us for Christ's sake; for without these favors we must be undone forever.

Our actions to be acceptable must be conformed to the revealed word. Without faith it is impossible to please him. Our hearts and motives too must be right, else we are not his children. Jer. xiii. 10, 13, 14.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 21. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land.

Man is a race of created beings, being one race, or one flesh. They were all involved in Adam as their progenitor, their federal head; so that all the human race, except Christ, were so involved in him as to be affected by his sin as he was; and to be as guilty of it as he was. If fathers are not now situated as he was; yet such is their relation, that the iniquities of fathers are visited upon their children to several generations; and that the piety of parents brings blessings upon their children.

24. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.

Sometimes God verifies his predictions or his promises with an oath, but it is only in condescension to our weakness, for his word or his thought is just as certain and infallible as any thing can be. So our word should be as sacred in its obligation upon us, as our oath. Matt. v. 37.

We may reflect that his promise or his oath is not the great reason of his doing any thing, so much as his thinking it; for what he thinks so he will do. His thought is right because he is infinite both in wisdom and goodness; therefore what he thinks at any time he thinks eternally and unchangeably. He thinks and promises only what is right. And then he does what is right because it is right. His promise or oath is not the first reason for the performance. There are many things that he sees right to do, which he has not spoken; but which he will certainly do, because they are right.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 14. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

In divine kindness the Lord reveals to us truths of himself that are paradoxical, or seem to be, to show to us that he is, in his ways and thoughts above us as the heavens are above the earth; to afford us an opportunity for the exercise of reverence and faith. He will not give us leave to think that he is altogether such a one as ourselves. If we do not bow with awe, and receive these seeming paradoxes with reverence, fear, and faith, it is our own fault, and we sin against light and knowledge.

If we can not perceive how it is right, yet we can know that it is right and good, because he who does it is infinitely wise and good. When we remember that man is fallen, and is an outlaw, deserving no good from the judge, but is under his wrath both deserving and liable to all evil, and every hour deserving to be sent to the lowest hell, we can perceive that he may, any moment, be deprived of all restraint, and given

up to strong delusion, and to a perverse spirit, as the just and righteous reward of his vileness. In the execution of such judgment upon sinful man Satan may be permitted to deceive, harden, and mingle a perverse spirit in their princes that may lead them to govern the people under its influence.

If we do not perceive the divine wisdom and goodness of this administration, it is owing to our weakness and depravity. Angels no doubt see it, and see it to be glorious in wisdom and justice.

CHAPTER XXXV.

VERSE 8. And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

The way of holiness is a way of light and purity: no wicked or unregenerate man can walk in it. It is traveled exclusively by the children of God.

It is not a path beneath the feet, but the manner of life, the way that a man lives, thinks, feels and acts. If a man does not live a penitent, grateful and believing life, he does not walk in this way; for it is the way of holiness. The wicked walk in devious and crooked ways, and will constantly err in judgment and in purpose of heart by the blindness of their depravity, and the deceptive wiles of the adversary, by whom they are led captive at his will.

They who walk in the path or highway of holiness, are exempt from his absolute dominion, and are led by the Spirit of God, the Spirit of holiness, in such a measure as to secure their perseverance in it.

Although the adversary makes efforts to entice and allure them from the path, yet his efforts are unavailing; for they are kept in the way by the power of God: and the righteous shall hold on his way, and wax stronger. Matt. xxiv. 24. 1 Pet. i. 5. Job xvii. 9. A hypocrite may leave his path, a moral man may leave his; but the Christian ever abides in his.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

VERSE 1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.

This was not taken as a decree, but as a threatening, and just as the Ninevites understood Jonah, and just as God taught people to understand all such threatenings. Jer. xviii. 7.

CHAPTER XL.

VERSE 5. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Universalities of this kind are numerous in the scriptures, and have to be interpreted by the context, and other scriptures. Interpreting this passage literally would make it include all beasts, as well as all men. And every one knows that the inspired writers do not predicate of beasts the knowledge of God. There are so many examples of this kind as to show us clearly the rule under which the inspired writers intended their writings to be understood. The prophet had express reference to the glory of God which should be displayed in the coming and work of the Messiah, which were to be manifested in his teachings and miracles to all people, instead of being confined to Israel only, as the former dispensation had been. It was now to be addressed to all people, both Jews and Gentiles. Luke xv. 2. Acts ix. 15; x. 45. Rev. v. 9.

In a literal sense all men did not see this salvation of Christ; neither did all the Israelites: but all men saw it in the sense above given, viz: all kinds of men, all nations, all tribes, as well as the people of Israel.

By misinterpreting such passages some deceive themselves about the extent of the atonement.

29. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

Like the preceding passage this also has a limited application

to the kind of persons described, and not all of them ; but to some of each kind. It is not applicable to all that are faint and weak ; but means that he will do such things, as to give power to the faint and strength to the weak. The coming of the Lord was said to be to give sight to the blind. And this it actually accomplished in kind, by giving sight to some who were blind. So when the Lord informed Ananias that Saul was a chosen vessel unto him to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel, Acts ix. 15, it was not necessary that he preach the gospel to every Gentile, to every king, and to every one of these classes of persons ; but the promise was fulfilled when it was done to some of them. Again, “and Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” Isa. lix. 20 ; lx. 3 ; which are accomplished, if there are any instances of the kind.

Passages of this character were necessary to counteract the narrowness and bigotry of the Jews, who supposed that the gospel dispensation was to be theirs exclusively, as the preceding dispensation had been. Isa. xlii. 6.

CHAPTER XLIII.

VERSE 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Isaiah seems to have had a better evangelical view of the gospel dispensation than any of the old prophets. He clearly shows that pardon and justification were independent of works and merit ; that God justified the ungodly for his own sake, and for his own glorious purposes to display himself to angels and men to conciliate their love and admiration, and thus enhance their bliss, as they beheld salvation as a gift of grace upon the ungodly and undeserving for the righteousness of God's Son ; for he provided it in his Son : and seeing this, the good displayed in it might lead them to repentance. Rom. ii. 4. The Lord did not save Saul of Tarsus for any good works ; for he was destitute of them, but saved him for his own righteousness in the person of his Son, and for his own glorious purposes as above. 1 Tim. i. 16. Isa. li. 21, 22. Ezek. xxxvi. 22.

27. Thy first father hath sinned.

Imputation lies at the foundation of the gospel. If there

could be no imputation, then Christ's righteousness could not be imputed to us, and without it there could be no salvation. Well, therefore, may the Christian love it, love God for it, and contend earnestly for it as for the faith once delivered to the saints.

CHAPTER XLIX.

VERSE 5. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.

In view of the backslidings of God's chosen nation, Isaiah was predestinated to be his prophet to preach his word to them, to admonish, warn and beseech them to return to the Lord, and take hold of his salvation. But if the prophet should not be successful; if the people should not hear and return to the Lord; the prophet's faith and labor would not be in vain—would not be lost; for the glorious goodness of God in sending them such a prophet, and his fidelity in his work would both be manifested in his faithful preaching. These were great objects. It is written, "My word shall not return to me void." And it is said of the apostles, "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish." 2 Cor. ii. 15.

This is a great encouragement to faithful ministers to be diligent and persevering in their official work; for whether they be successful or not, their fidelity will be rewarded. Ezek. iii. 19.

CHAPTER LI.

VERSE 16. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

The grace bestowed upon the prophet was to qualify him for the arduous work of the ministry—the preaching of God's word valiantly and faithfully whatever difficulties he might meet with; so that, by his ministry, God might perform the great works of planting the heavens and laying the founda-

tions of the earth, or bless Israel both spiritually and temporally.

CHAPTER LII.

VERSE 15. So shall he sprinkle many nations.

In describing the coming of Christ, and his sufferings in introducing the gospel dispensation, and the bringing in of all nations, the Lord identifies this bringing in of the Gentiles by the prediction that he, Christ, shall sprinkle many nations. It seems natural and unavoidable to interpret this description as relating to some characteristic feature of the gospel dispensation. As water baptism, taking the place of circumcision, was such a characteristic feature of the gospel dispensation, it is natural to interpret this sprinkling as referring to this seal of the covenant; and showing that gospel baptism was to be by sprinkling of water upon these many nations.

CHAPTER LIV.

VERSE 5. For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

This is not a command to use this title for God exclusively, but a declaration that he should be esteemed worthy of this title. Even in this passage are no less than six titles for him.

Light is here thrown upon the memorial name of the Infinite One, which some have superstitiously thought it was revealed to Moses as his exclusive name, and which is found in Exodus iii. 15. That this memorial name was not exclusive, is evident from the fact that Moses never used it afterward; but having recorded it in the tablets of Revelation, it remains at this day a witness of its being his name. It is written of Jacob, "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel," Gen. xxxii. 28; and yet in the verses immediately following he is four times called by his old name of Jacob, as it generally is throughout the remainder of the Pentateuch; which proves that these scriptures are not to be taken as exclusive or restrictive. No more be called Jacob only.

10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

God's covenant with his Son for his people, and with his people through his Son, was made as an everlasting covenant: and though, for unbelief, some of the natural branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in and have become heirs, and will so continue until the end of time, and until all the Gentiles shall be evangelized, and Israel shall be remembered, their ungodliness turned away, and they re-engrafted into their own olive-tree. Rom. xi. 25. When this shall take place, all heaven and all earth shall see that the covenant was everlasting, and that the Godhead is faithful to its stipulations, although many like Judas have been cut off, and have perished through unbelief; yet many of Abraham's descendants in every generation are saved.

CHAPTER LVIII.

VERSE 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.

As faith without works is dead being alone, so fasting by abstinence from food, drink and recreation which is essential to it, if without enjoined accompaniments in holy living, is dead also. There is no fast without such abstinence. But if there be nothing but abstinence from food, drink, recreation, and labors, there is nothing more than hypocrites can perform.

To put emphasis upon these accompaniments as the whole of fasting, is to commit an error; for they are only accompaniments. It is common with the inspired writers to deny a thing only for the purpose of depreciating it. A thing is said to have no value by reason of the value that excelleth. So abstinence here is made of no account because it is not the whole.

So again it is said, "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices," Jer. vii. 22. Ps. l. 5. Hos. vi. 6. John xi. 26; xv. 22. To undo the heavy burden, was to not exact that justice from the

poor which they could not render. Matt. xviii. 25-27. There is nothing in this passage about slavery that was authorized, except that it applies to the oppression of holding a Hebrew servant after his term of six years was expired. To hold him until then was not oppressive. So Lev. xxv. 39-44.

CHAPTER LXIII.

VERSE 10. But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

The Divine Author of revelation is not careful over particular passages to couch them so that profane and ungodly men can not wrest them and make a bad use of them. He was not careful so to guard the forbidden tree that our first parents could not approach it. Just so it is with the revelation. Those who wish to cavil have the opportunity to do so, but at their own peril, while those who love and fear God, and revere his holy name, will endeavor to put a good construction on his word and works. This will not be difficult, for it is written, "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." John vii. 17. Isa. xxxv. 6. Jas. i. 5.

God has been careful so to reveal the whole code of divine truth that one part explains another. He that wishes to know the truth will find it, because he will use the right means and he will be blessed in doing so.

To break every yoke must be interpreted to apply to unlawful yokes only. The parent has a yoke of government upon the child, for children must obey their parents. But this being a lawful yoke need not be broken. Neither can this scripture be interpreted to require us to break the yoke of matrimony, for this is a yoke. 2 Cor. vi. 14. Neither does it require us to apostatize from Christ Jesus and his easy yoke. Matt. xi. 29, 30.

Turning, recorded of God, can not be interpreted as any change in him, because we know that he is unchangeable, and even without shadow of turning. Jas. i. 17. As God is infinite and his ways incomprehensible, and as these ways have to be revealed to us in human language, that being finite and made to express finite things, is not capable of representing infinite things. And spiritual and heavenly things having been also but very imperfectly understood by the generations who have constructed human language, therefore our words are

inadequate to the representation of infinite and spiritual things. Then only is the subject introduced, so that we must strive to elicit the real meaning by all the best efforts we can employ. We are therefore notified by one inspired writer that he speaks after the manner of men. Rom. vi. 19. Gal. iii. 15. So we have to do, viz: use human language and men's mode of representation. Let us also remember that as man's language is more or less inadequate to express infinite things and heavenly, so also must be our capacity to comprehend them.

The turning of the Lord is only apparent and not real, and belongs to his administration, and not to his thoughts or purposes, so that there can be only the appearance of change in his administration when there is none in him. When angels fell from their allegiance, God turned from being their friend because he was unchangeably just because they had turned.

17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

The prophet inquires why the Lord had made his chosen professing people to err or depart from his holy ways. He made no exception of his own case, and of the cases of other faithful and pious Israelites, but spoke of the nation of which the great majority were backslidden, and his language relates only to them. The pious men among them are all exempt from this hardening influence which was a judgment upon the nation for their prevalent, continued and obstinate impiety. The wicked part of the nation was the greater part of it, gave character to it and ripened it for judgments. These wicked and unworthy Israelites had not fallen from grace, but were always unregenerate, and like other sinners were liable to be hardened, as was Pharaoh and his subjects. Exod. xiv. 17.

The prophet was so settled and established in the doctrines of grace that he speaks of the subject of God's hardening sinners without any apology or explanation. He does not seem to think that his brethren would be startled or stumbled at it. And why should we, when in the Lord's Prayer we have the doctrine in the petition, "Lead us not into temptation," introduced with the same confidence.

The prophet prayed for Israel for the inheritance of the Lord that he would return to them in pardoning grace, and sanctify their hearts, and bestow upon them spiritual and temporal blessings.

CHAPTER LXIV.

VERSE 6. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

It is written that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolish unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. Those, therefore, under this natural blindness are likely to betray their state of heart by refraining from such humiliating confessions. The greater a man's piety the more humiliating is the position which he desires to take before the throne of the Divine Majesty. All the race of fallen man is vile and unclean before God.

There is propriety then in the revealed test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. vii. 16, 20. John xiii. 35.

CHAPTER LXV.

VERSE 1. I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

The prophet is here foreshowing the calling of the Gentiles, although the principle is equally applicable to the calling of individuals, as the calling of Saul of Tarsus and to other converts who have been converted without seeking, both adults and infants. The Gentiles had not the means of grace, were not seeking God, yet when the gospel dispensation was opened the Gentiles of the various nations were brought into it, *i. e.*, some of them.

This passage relates to events which were to take place seven hundred years afterward. And yet it is put in the present tense, as is usual in revelation, for it is written that God calleth things that are not as though they were. Rom. iv. 17. They are often spoken of as though they were past when they were yet future. Thus they were hidden, wrapped up in prophecy, to be manifested in due time. Thus in the Psalms: "They pierced my hands and my feet." Ps. xxii. 16.

Also they may have been spoken of as already done, because they were fixed and settled in the counsels of heaven by him whose counsels shall stand and who will do all his pleasure. Isa. xli. 10.

Means are appointed of God and are generally necessary and indispensable. But he can work without them; and he sometimes does work without them, to show us that he can. Jesus the Mediator and the Savior was provided without sinners asking for the provision, and even before the world was, as the election of his people was made before the fall.

25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountains, saith the Lord.

Both the vicious and persecuting, the Gentiles and the Jews, when they became converted to God and are born of the Holy Ghost become as harmless as doves in the church of God, which is his holy mountain. They will love those who love the Lord. They will not promulgate false doctrine, nor do anything that will provoke their fellow-worshippers. But in all God's holy mountain—the visible church—they will all mind the same things and all speak the same things, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. i. 10.

This seems to have signally been fulfilled in the primitive church, when the brethren sold their houses and their lands to relieve their destitute brethren, and when any point of disagreement arose, as about circumcision, they took effectual measures to restore concord and unanimity. How much more noble and Christian like would we appear if we all would do so now. Piety now ought to yield the same fruit—let the same light shine. If it were of the same kind we can not but think that it would. It is said that dust shall be the serpent's meat. Those who are of the opposite character and not of heavenly birth will feed on iniquity, as the serpent inhales and feeds on dust, as he ever has; no change will take place for the better with those who remain in unbelief. Gen. iii. 14. Dan. xii. 10.

CHAPTER LXVI.

VERSE 2. For all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

God will not look toward him for his righteousness nor for his goodness, but will look toward him in grace for Jesus'

sake ; for he intends mercy for his own sake upon ungodly sinners. He will chose unworthy and ungodly sinners and makes them know and feel their ungodliness and tremble under it.

Whatever praise proud and self-righteous men may arrogate to themselves for erecting splendid houses of worship, erecting organs, having a splendid choir, and having all things in fine style, and expect the divine favor for such evidence of their devotion, they are taught that a meek and humble spirit and a contrite heart are of those things that God regards, and that attract the eye of the Holy One. See verse 5. Chap. lvii. 15. Luke xviii. 10. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Eccl. v. 2. Matt. xv. 8. Ps. lxxviii. 37.

3. He that killeth an ox as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered a swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

They were just as heartless and undevout in divine things as they were in their secular business. Such was the back-slidden state of the church, and such their cold, heartless and irreverent attendance upon divine ordinances, for their hearts were not in them. They had none of that awe and reverence which are essential to his worship. See Gen. xv. 12. Dan. x. 7, 8, 11. Gen. xxviii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Ps. lxxxix. 11, 12. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Tit. i. 15.

4. I also will choose their delusions.

As Israel would not walk in God's ways, that are good and wise and profitable, he would choose to which of the evil spirits he would deliver them over. If they would walk in evil ways, the Lord would choose what evil ways they should walk in, what idols they should serve, so as to make the wrath of man to praise him, and he would prevent and restrain them from all those which would not be overruled and made to redound to his glory and the best good of his kingdom.

Men and angels are free agents in always choosing their own ways. But how far they will be able to carry them out depends upon him and is under his providence. No man does anything good or bad, only as the man chooses, nor even then unless the Lord permit it. Satan chose to afflict and to tempt Job, to test his sincerity, but he had to get divine permission to do it. Pilate had no power over the Lord unless it was given him from above. The legion willed to enter the swine, but they had to get permission to do it. Balaam could not go

to Midian at Balak's request without divine permission. God holds the scepter. Hence we learn the security of the saints, and how the Lord can perform his promises, although it involve the action of evil agents who can not be beyond his control.

23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

From one regular season to another, pious men of all nations, under the gospel dispensation, should convene for social divine worship; for then the Spirit would be poured upon the nations where the gospel was preached, and converts should be increased as the drops of the morning. For the purpose of serving a theory, and promoting a party, the word *all* is construed in an unlimited sense, by Arminians and Universalists, in such passages as this. See 1 John ii. 2. John i. 9. Mark xvi. 15. Men do not reflect upon the absurdity and falsehood in which they are wresting the scriptures, making quadrupeds and reptiles to become the subjects of grace.

It seems to have required a great variety of declarations to counteract the prejudices and bigotry of the Jews against the bringing in of the Gentiles, and engrafting them into the good olive-tree, and making them fellow-heirs of the grace of the Abrahamic covenant: and with all this variety it was difficult of accomplishment. There is no need, however, of any misleading themselves on the subject; for such expressions as *all flesh, the whole world*, will not admit of such unlimited construction, because the one would include quadrupeds and reptiles, and the other would include trees, rocks and rivers; for they are part of the whole world. Rev. vii. 9 contains a parallel passage, so that we can let scripture interpret scripture, that we may be on safe ground. See Rev. v. 9. Acts xv. 14.

JEREMIAH.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 5. Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

As the Lord knew Jeremiah before he was born, so he knows every soul before it has any being, even in eternity ages of ages before creation. But this knowing of Jeremiah implies more than cognizance, and implies special favor toward him. At the final judgment, when he will say to sinners, "I never knew you," it imports that he never knew them as his saints—as the subjects of his favor. So when it is written, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate," the idea of gracious favor is to be understood. I never knew you as my children.

Divine decrees and predestination are so plainly taught that no mistake can possibly be made by the pious reader. There is no room for any.

8. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

The divine sovereignty is so fully and so clearly stated in the scriptures, that no one can be ignorant of it without culpable unbelief. All the promises and all the prophecies are based upon it, verse 19.

10. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

The first four of these prerogatives are of one import showing us that repetition is a feature of revelation; and for the purpose of *emphasis*. Isa. xxviii. 10. This commission to the prophet is not to be taken literally and absolutely; for he could not destroy nations, nor build them up; for no power to do thus was conferred upon him, notwithstanding verse 18,

which goes to demonstrate that the figurative view of these prerogatives is the true one : for the prophet was neither an iron pillar nor a brazen wall, except in a figurative sense. He was to attend to the exercise of these prerogatives in his ministry, declaring in prophecies who would be destroyed, and who built up ; which shows how we are to understand John xxii. 23, and how Matt. xxvi. 26, and all that class of scripture, which is numerous.

The prophet could declare the judgments of God upon those nations that were to be destroyed, and blessings upon those to be built up, and the Lord would bring to pass the words which the prophet pronounced ; and would thus bear witness to Jeremiah's commission.

And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 1 Sam. iii. 19. Hos. vi. 5.

19. And they shall fight against thee ; but they shall not prevail against thee ; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.

We are taught to put all our trust in God, who is our only support and defense. He is our keeper, our hope, our righteousness, and our salvation.

This passage enables us to get the meaning of chap. xx. 7 : "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." The promise of deliverance from the hands of his persecutors deceived him, or led him to deceive himself with full expectation of exemption from persecution ; whereas the Lord meant to support him in his troubles, and to preserve him through them. All which he did. But as the prophet had expected exemption from persecution, he complained that God had disappointed his expectations of exemption from persecution. See Ezek. xiv. 9, which is a parallel passage.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 3. For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

As the husbandman could not have harvest if he should sow his seed upon unplowed ground, and among grass, weeds and thorns, so the professor of religion, if he do not repent, and have religion deep in his heart, will be barren and unfruitful.

10. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

There is a free use of words in the scriptures, with great varieties of meaning. In this place, as in others, the word deceive is used in the sense of disappoint or deceive the expectations. Men may calculate too largely, and hope for too much from the promises, as respects worldly enjoyments. Deut. xxix. 19. Jer. 3. 15; vi. 14; vii. 9, 10. xx. 7. Ezek. xiv. 9

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 30. Reprobate silver shall men call them because the Lord hath rejected them.

As no sinner can forgive his own sins or regenerate himself, or sanctify his own soul, he must remain where he is under condemnation, unless the Lord of salvation shall see it to be suitable and proper to exert his Almighty power to deliver him from his lost condition. Eph. i. 19. If the Lord leave a sinner in his sins he thereby reprobates him; which is all that is meant by reprobation. All the fallen angels are thus reprobated. Some sinners also are thus reprobated. Verses 16, 22, 23. Jer. xiii. 14; xxi. 7. If the Lord thus rejects them now, it is only for their sins; but as he is ever of one mind he always knew that he would do it, Acts xv. 18, which includes all the reprobation that there is.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 23. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.

The reasonableness of this caveat is obvious, for the wise man has no lease of his wisdom: he may be deprived of it to-morrow by either death or lunacy while he is boasting of it, as Nebuchadnezzar was visited when boasting. Dan. iv. 30, 31. Nothing can be more unsuitable or unbecoming a

polluted, sinful, dependent creature than the pride of boasting, either in word or thought. The wise, the mighty, and the rich are indebted to Divine Providence for all their possessions and advantages; and for every hour of their continuance. How then can they boast or glory in that which another lends them? 1 Cor. iv. 7. Prosperous men have much to make them thankful and humble, but they have nothing to boast of, nothing to make them proud, nothing to glory in. 2 Sam. vii. 18. Rom. ii. 4.

The prophet seems to utter the sentiment of the wise man, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Eccl. ix. 11.

The same was taught by Moses, when by the word of the Lord he informed Israel that it was God's love to their fathers that enabled them to drive out nations from before them which were greater and mightier than they were. Deut. iv. 37, 38.

God is not only King in Zion; but he is King of kings, King of the whole universe; we are in his hand as clay is in the hand of the potter.

It would be wise for every soul to become reconciled to God, repenting of sin, turning, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and serving God, making piety toward God the great business and end of our being.

How well then may the poor lost soul be taught to look to God for every blessing, and for grace unto salvation, and to cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. As it is written, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for all this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

There is a beautiful consistency as well as harmony in the doctrines of grace. Dan. ii. 21. Ps. xlviii. 10-14; cxi. 7, 8; xxxiii. 4. Isa. xxv. 1. But these glorious things none of the wicked shall understand. Dan. xii. 10. Matt. xi. 25. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 7.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 12. When they fast, I will not hear their cry.

Fasting requires abstinence from food, drink, and all bodily and mental recreations and enjoyments that are of a carnal and worldly nature, as well as our own labor, and the labor of our children and domestics, and must be accompanied with earnest prayer, and deep felt confessions of sin.

We may here learn another important rule of interpretation, that words are used to suggest subjects, and then when a subject is suggested, any branch of it may be the subject of discussion, as fasting is the subject here, and a remark is made upon the accompanying prayer.

Carnal men will find it difficult to know how to understand election with, the necessity of means, repentance and faith. And perhaps even spiritually-minded men may not feel as clear upon it as they wish ; but they will go forward trusting in the Lord.

But when sinners have passed their day of grace and filled the cup of their iniquities, no prayers nor fasting can be availing : they are given up of God as fitted for destruction. The inquiry naturally arises here, what then becomes of the divine promises, "Every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Matt. vii. 8. If we will let the scriptures explain this scripture, we shall learn that although it seems to be peremptory and unconditional ; yet such is not the meaning nor the intent either of this nor of other kindred passages, which are without conditions or limitations. This is the plain teaching of the word. See Jer. xviii. 7-10. This is the explanation which is kindly given us to keep us from misinterpreting these passages. The whole code of revelation confirms this rule of limited and conditional construction. For instance, Moses asked the Lord that he might go over Jordan and see that good land. But he did not receive. Paul besought the Lord thrice that the thorn in the flesh might depart from him. But he did not receive what he asked.

Again, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able." Deut. iii. 25, 26. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. Luke xiii. 24.

Such passages as have not this limitation are not destroyed by this limitation ; for limiting them is not destroying them ; they have signification, and afford much encouragement. Those who ask do often receive for asking for Christ's sake ; and those who seek are generally those who find.

If those who ask do not always receive, and if those who seek do not always find, yet it is sufficient encouragement for us to ask and seek if many do succeed, or if there is only a mere peradventure that we may succeed and obtain.

This is confirmed by the scriptures putting success upon this ground of possibility a mere peradventure. 1 Tim. ii. 25. Gen. xxxi. 31 ; xxxii. 20. Exod. xiii. 17 ; xxxii. 30. Num. xxii. 6 ; xxiii. 3, 27. From all these passages it is evident that a mere peradventure is a sufficient encouragement to ground action upon. Besides in civil government criminal

seek pardon only on this ground. Our seeking pardon of God can only be on this ground; for as this remedial system of salvation is promulgated before our transgressions, if our pardon were not thus suspended upon this peradventure, it would be a repealing and a nullifying of the law, and would be an indulgence and encouragement to commit sin.

The Christian will accept salvation with cordiality and will strive to obtain it notwithstanding it be suspended upon this peradventure. Salvation to the sinner is not offered upon any stronger or any other ground of assurance beforehand—before he becomes a penitent believer. But when he has become a believer in Christ, is united to him by faith, then the promises of eternal life and glory are absolute, but not unconditional, for he must persevere unto the end or he will perish. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Heb. vi. 3-6; x. 26, 27. Matt. x. 22. Thus is the salvation of the believer conditional. But the uncertainty is with him, because of the genuineness of his present faith, and the certainty of his future perseverance can not be without some shadow of doubt or generally is not. But where there is absolute assurance, there is danger of its being from pride, ignorance and self-righteousness, and without evangelical fruit; yet, doubtless, there are pious persons who attain to the full assurance of hope, without uncomfortable darkness.

If, however, a Christian's final salvation cause him anxiety, from its seeming uncertain to him, so as to lead him to say with Newton:

"Tis a point I long to know;
Oft it causes anxious thought,
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his or am I not?"

Yet it is not uncertain with God; for if he truly repents and believes, he will be saved; God has undertaken for him; and having begun the work in his regeneration, he will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ, and will keep him by his power through faith unto salvation. If his salvation is a certainty, it is because he will persevere unto the end; whether he knows this or not God knows it, because he has it in his own hand, and has covenanted with his Son, that he shall be sanctified, pardoned and upheld to the end.

This covenant between the persons of the Trinity is the only reason why no regenerated soul has ever fallen from grace or been lost and never will be. The conditions of this covenant between the Trinity have been performed by the Son on his part by his atoning sacrifice, and therefore the Father and the Spirit will perform theirs in the complete salvation of every one for whom the atonement has been made, or that covenant

would be broken on the part of the 'Father and the Spirit, which never can be.

If any darkness envelop this subject, because it is both absolute and conditional, uncertain to us and certain to God, it is no objection against its truth, for it combines both human and divine agencies, one being fallible and the other infallible. So to some persons the certainty of election and the necessity of means and conditions seem to create a solecism; nevertheless they are unavoidable truths and can not be controverted nor separated.

Means are indispensable, though they are not efficacious in themselves; their efficacy is in the divine hand. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase. Both are *sine qua nons*. If the gospel were not preached souls would not be convicted, and if God did not work no souls would be converted. And the decree includes both of them together. Neither of them is decreed separately and alone. If election is decreed, it is election to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. 2 Thess. ii. 13. All of them are decreed together, as necessary parts of one whole. The decree to create man involves all his limbs, his members, his faculties, his life, his activity. If part of him had been decreed, and that part only made, say one-half, it would be a monster—a helpless thing. Those who cavil at the seeming absurdity of believing in divine decrees, and yet using means, are ignorant of the obvious fact that decrees never accomplish anything. The reign of the Lord, a thousand years in the millennium, was decreed before the world was created, but the decree does not accomplish it and never will. It requires more, it requires actual exertion to accomplish the decree. The same is our experience: we resolve to build a house, or go a journey two years hence, and all this time the house is not built, the journey is not undertaken; no, nor never will be unless the actual enterprise be undertaken: the resolution accomplishes nothing. Let it be remembered also that God never does anything because he has decreed it. All things stand in his sight just as they would stand if they were not decreed, so that he can do just what he now sees it good to do, and he does nothing else. He does not anything because it is decreed, but because it is right and good. Because it was right and good to do it, therefore, it was decreed, and therefore it will be done, but not only because it was decreed so much as because it is right.

The promise that the regenerate shall hold on in holy living is absolute. So is the promise of seed-time and harvest, and that a flood shall not again destroy the earth, and the kingdom of God shall rise and triumph and the wicked shall be punished

and the pious believer shall be saved and the world shall be burnt up.

If it were decreed that the temple would be built by Solomon, his actual exertion and using the means would not be unnecessary. If it be decreed that the bodies of men and beasts be nourished and sustained by food, the decree would not render the food unnecessary.

If it be the divine law that faith cometh by hearing, and that hearing is by the word of God, then it must be necessary that a man hear the word, else faith can not come by hearing. All the means that have ever been used in the world and succeeded, have accomplished divine decrees and were necessary to their accomplishment.

When the employment of means is not attended with success, as to the object which we aimed to accomplish, yet some other divine purpose is always accomplished. Isa. xlix. 5. 1 Kings viii. 18. When God decreed the creation of a tree, all the parts of it, as root, body, branches, bark, leaves, flowers and fruit were all comprehended in that decree, all equally necessary to it. In like manner means are appointed to promote objects and accomplish purposes, and are indispensable, because these objects and purposes are to be accomplished by these means and in no other manner. No husbandman raises a harvest that does not sow the seed, but he may sow and not reap.

Those people whom the Lord would not hear were reprobated, or given up to their own ways. Whenever a sinner dies without regeneration, he is driven away in his sins, in his depravity, and is reprobated for his sins.

Herein the kindness of God appears in thus warning us of the consequences to be apprehended from not remembering our Creator in the days of our youth, and not giving our whole lives to him and to his service, not seeking the Lord while he might be found and not calling upon him while he was near; for there is reason to expect that we shall be forsaken, given up, reprobated for our obstinate perseverance in our wickedness. How much better it would have been to have yielded in our youth, and to have been persevering in piety all our lives.

That the Lord thus expostulates with sinners shows his goodness, his kind compassion. And for this every sinner should turn to God, love and worship Him, as well as for giving His Son to save him from death. But if they stubbornly refuse to improve their precious privileges, it is just and right for Him to take all these abused privileges from them, as He said in the preceding verse to the prophet, Pray not for this people for their good. There is no more any

mercy for them. Their doom is sealed forever. When they fast I will not hear their cry. It is a fearful thing for a sinner to refuse one offer of grace, or to continue one day in rebellion against God and in the rejection of his grace. Sinners of the human family are, as rational creatures and as moral agents, all bound to be holy. Every hour the duty is binding upon them. If they refuse their obligation and despise the kind offers of grace, it is no wonder that He withdraws these neglected, gracious and kind offers, and says, Because you despise my rich grace, I will recall the abused offer; and hereafter I will not hear your cries, your prayers, nor your supplications.

He is under no obligations to sinners, who are a rebellious race. He may cast them off at any hour and doom them to eternal perdition for their sins. As salvation is of grace he can give it or withhold it as he will.

He shows his sovereignty in his grace by not giving or offering it to angels who are fallen. No mercy is shown to them. And yet they are under obligations to love God because he is good, just, holy. If he do not have mercy upon them, yet they are bound to love him because he is holy and just, and they are bound to serve him because he is their Creator, the Father of their being. All the fallen angels are bound to be holy, as are all sinners, whether they have grace or not. Devils and sinners are not innocent in their depravity. Sin is sin and depravity is depravity in any moral agent, independent of all other consideration. If God withhold mercy and grace from some sinners as he does from all devils, he is holy, wise, just and good in it, and they are bound to give him their whole heart in love.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 7. O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed.

When the prophet complains that he was deceived, he uses the word in the sense of his expectations being disappointed, as it is used in other places. Isa. lxiii. 17. Ezek. xiv. 9. The prophet had formed expectations of exemption from persecutions, which was more than God's promise intended. Jer. i. 8, 19.

When his persecutions became heavy and protracted, he complains in the text he was disappointed in his expectations of exemption from persecution.

He also complained, saying, "Every one doth curse me," xv. 10; and to curse his day like Job. See Jer. xx. 14. Job iii. 1. Words being thus used in various senses by the inspired writers, and sometimes in new and peculiar senses, has led some to misunderstand the passages in which words are so used. But let us remember that God's word is everlasting truth, and that the words used by the inspired writers, as used by them, were the most suitable for the purposes of the Divine Spirit, and were intended to put men upon study and research in investigating the scriptures, as they dig for hidden treasures in the earth, and to search the scriptures and to ask in prayer for help in understanding them. Jas. i. 5. Gen. iv. 1, 26; vi. 6. 1 Kings ii. 9. Ezek. xiv. 9. Amos ix. 8, 9. John v. 39. Rom. ix. 3. 1 John ii. 2.

CHAPTER XXXI.

VERSE 30. But every one shall die for his own iniquity.

Every one who has committed a crime which, by the law is punishable with death, shall be put to death for his own iniquity, and no other person shall be punishable for it. It does not mean that every one who commits sin is reprobated.

CHAPTER XXXII.

VERSE 35. And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not; neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

The backsliding of the leading men of Judah led them to omit what God had commanded, and to do what he had not commanded. This is characteristic with the wicked who forsake good to practice evil; omit what is plainly right to indulge what is as clearly wrong. The worship of Molech was not required, neither did it come into the divine mind to require it, or that they ought to do it. vii. 31; v. 28; xlv. 17, 21 Ps. xxxvii. 35.

CHAPTER LI.

VERSE 5. For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.

When God chose Abram and called him, and separated him from his kindred and from his father's house, the family were idolaters. If they were idolaters, were so unworthy when they were called, and if they were elected only of grace, and were only sinful and unworthy then, their Father could never see them any worse afterward, nor see cause to forsake them. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii. 5. Deut. iv. 31. 1 Chron. xxviii. 20. 2 Sam. vii. 15. Even the wicked enjoyed public blessings. Let it be remembered that salvation is of grace, and that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance—what he undertakes he will accomplish. Rom. xi. 29.

When the Lord tried Moses by an offer to disinherit Israel, and only retain the family of Moses, and make them the seed of Abram and the nation of Israel, he replied, "Remember Abram, Isaac and Jacob, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidest unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever." The Lord put this argument and prayer into the mouth of Moses that he might prevail. And Moses declining the offer showed that he was not ambitious.

Jehovah is glorious in his faithfulness, for it displays his immutability and truth. He is of one mind, and without shadow of turning. Ps. lxxxix. 20, 37. Jas. i. 17.

His glorious perfections shine with effulgence in the certain final perseverance of the saints, who are kept by the power of God.

LAMENTATIONS.

CHAPTER I. .

VERSE 12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.

The great sorrow of the prophet was not for his personal sufferings or afflictions, for these he could bear; he is complaining in the name of Israel and complaining for them, and he was chiding those who could not feel for Zion.

The church, for backslidings and unfaithfulness, may expect to be ill-treated by the wicked. Prov. xvi. 7. But when she suffers thus, it is not without the hand of the Father, who does nothing without cause. Evil men often afflict the righteous without any other cause on their part but enmity against God and his people. But God knows of this cause, and he knows of other causes, as their backsliding and his own love. Heb. xii. 6. Rom. viii. 28.

When wicked men grieve the children of God by evil speaking, teaching false doctrine, profanity and wickedness, it would be better for them that a millstone were hung about their neck and they were cast into the sea; for the Head of the church espouses their cause, and takes as done to himself the injuries done to his people, who are as dear to him as the apple of his eye. Matt. xxv. 40. Zech. ii. 8.

What men do against the children of God they not only do against him but do the injury to themselves, when with sorrow and shame they will give account at the great day. All men, therefore, have a deep interest in the happiness of God's people and in the honor and prosperity of religion, since their own salvation may be connected with its influence and success. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

15. The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men.

The prophet is speaking in the name of the nation, the people of Israel; and acknowledges that Divine Providence

directed all the calamitous events that the wicked persecutors were perpetrating upon Israel.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 14. Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

There were different kinds of prophets. They were not all godly men; but occupied, in sacrilege, the place of godly men. Their preaching was to honor themselves, to please themselves, and to amuse and please their hearers; but they were not intended to serve and honor God, and to save the souls of their hearers; and thus brought judgments both upon themselves and their hearers; as it is written, "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err." Jer. xxiii. 13. Such teachers may easily be known by the hearers if they are wise and thoughtful. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matt. vii. 16. John vii. 17.

We may not give countenance and encouragement to false teaching by hearing them. Prov. xix. 27. 2 John 10. Religious teachers whose lips should keep knowledge, and who should not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, are liable to be led astray so as to preach another gospel, or what is not the gospel of Christ, and thus to drown men in destruction and perdition.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 33. For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

Although there is a sense in which he does not willingly afflict men, yet there is also a sense in which he does willingly afflict them; just as there is a sense in which a judge of a court does not willingly pronounce judgment upon a criminal, but does it with tears of sorrow; so there is a sense in which he does it willingly, to discharge his duty, to uphold government, to uphold the law, and to render justice; for if he did

not do it in some sense willingly, he would not do it all : for a man in some sense must will what he does, as he can not act without his will.

A father punishes his child with sorrow, and would avoid it if he could consistently with his love to his child ; for he that spareth the rod hateth his son. Prov. xiii. 24.

Our heavenly Father in some sense willingly afflicts the children of men, as when he does it for their own profit. Heb. xii. 10. Ps. cxix. 67. Rom. viii. 28. So also when he lays heavy judgments upon the wicked because justice can no longer bear with them. Jer. xlix. 12. It may be difficult to make some such subjects entirely clear ; but we understand that the goodness and mercy of God make him delight more in some things than in others. As he takes pleasure in a sinner turning from sin, rather than perishing in it. Ezek. xviii. 23, 30, 31, 32.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 16. The anger of the Lord hath divided them ; he will no more regard them : they respected not the persons of the priests, they favored not the elders.

When the wicked go from one degree of depravity to another, they are at length given up and left in their sins to perish without mercy, and without hope. They may apprehend that they have arrived at this fearful point, when they no longer respect the persons of ministers and elders. Matt. x. 14, 40 ; xxv. 40. John xiii. 20.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 7. Our fathers have sinned, and are not ; and we have borne their iniquities.

The Lord in righteousness visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. There is such a relation between parent and offspring, ruler and subject, that the iniquities of the former may be visited upon the latter. The sins of Saul deprived Jonathan and Saul's family of the throne of Israel, and brought a dearth upon Palestine. 2 Sam. xxi. 1. The children of Sodom, and of Dathan and Abiram died with their parents.

EZEKIEL.



CHAPTER III.

VERSE 7. But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.

The same state of heart that leads men to disobey God, leads them to disregard the teaching of his faithful servants; and the same heart that leads men to obey God, leads them likewise to obey his word spoken by his servants. Luke x. 16. John xv. 20.

There were periods when Israel feared God and regarded the words of the Lord, and the words of his servants; as when Samuel came to Bethlehem the people trembled at his coming. 1 Sam. xvi. 4. Exod. xii. 31-33. Matt. viii. 34.

There also were periods of great degeneracy, when they regarded not the word of the Lord spoken by his servants. From these variations arise difficult questions, as when a pious generation is succeeded by one that was licentious. If it be true of individuals that the righteous shall hold on his way, why may it not be true of nations also? Although this be true of individuals, yet it is not necessarily so of nations; for a generation that is pious may pass away, and another generation may succeed a hundred years afterward that are not pious.

18. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thy hand.

Ministers of the gospel, and parents of children, should bear a trembling sense of responsibility for the souls committed to their care, lest they perish through their neglect. 1 Cor. viii. 11. Ministers and parents should watch over those committed to their care, and comport themselves with dignity, zeal, earnestness, a good example, and right teaching, and thus

train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; lest if they perish through their neglect their blood or the loss of the souls of their wards be required at their hands, or the blame laid to the charge of those who unfaithfully neglect the precious souls committed to their care. It was this responsibility that made an apostle exclaim, "And who is sufficient for these things ? Who can perform these duties with good fidelity ? Yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

21. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned ; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

One warning that gospel ministers are bound to give is, that if the righteous fall away, it will be impossible to renew them again to repentance, and nothing remains for them but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Heb. vi. 4 ; x. 26.

By what is taught in this and verse 18, we see the importance of means, in that eternal life and eternal death are suspended upon this faithfulness in the use of means. "He shall surely live, because he is warned." If souls are saved by being warned in the faithful preaching of the word, or by the delivery of the divine message, these means are of infinite value ; and are so necessary that salvation is connected with them.

It is a truth that faith cometh by hearing ; and it is a truth that it comes in no other way : no man ever believed in Jesus Christ who never heard of him. No man was ever regenerated unless the Holy Spirit put his will and his [almighty] hand to the work.

Just so no man raises a crop of corn or wheat unless he employs the appropriate means. If he should sow or plant sawdust he would not raise either wheat or corn. And who will still say, that the certainty of divine knowledge renders means unnecessary ? We know that it does not render means unnecessary ; for if God must necessarily know what will be, he must know whether the husbandman will plant sawdust or corn. His knowledge or decree covers both points : they are decreed together as two parts of one thing.

But sometimes the seeding is decreed alone, and then there will be no harvest ; for if the harvest were not decreed there will be none, whatever seeding and other means may be used or not. So, if God give not the increase, the planting and watering of Paul and Apollos must be in vain. Truly means are sometimes useless, and are always so when the Wise and

Holy Sovereign will not give them success. Yet as they are sometimes, and perhaps generally successful, there is encouragement to use them from the mere peradventure that success may attend them; and also from the certainty that there can be no success without them. In this are manifest the children of God, and the children of the devil. One diligently uses means, notwithstanding divine decrees, because he is commanded to use them; and the other laughs him to scorn for inconsistency. But wisdom is justified of her children. Matt. xi. 19.

God will not accept fasting and prayer when performed in a heartless manner, as he had respect to Abel, but not to Cain. Gen. iv. 4, 5.

One warning which ministers must give, has been mentioned. Others are the following, viz :

To honor their father and mother.

To rise up before the hoary head, and to honor the face of the old man.

To obey civil rulers.

Not to profess religion without experiencing it; for to eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's table, is to eat and drink damnation to ourselves. 1 Cor. xi. 29.

Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Heb. xii. 14.

Except we repent we must perish. Luke xiii. 3.

Except we be regenerated, we can not be saved. John iii. 3.

When we stand praying we must forgive. Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15; xviii. 35; xi. 25.

We must love our brethren, and all men. 1 John iii. 10. Matt. xxii. 39.

We must use hospitality. And always as the Bible teaches. Isa. viii. 20.

To teach servants to obey and love their masters, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. 1 Tim. vi. 1-5.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 9. And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

Reading this verse in a negligent manner has left some under

a wrong impression. The prophet here spoken of is a false prophet; and not one who is not so deceived in his expectation of the fulfillment of his prediction. 1 Sam. iii. 19.

When a false prophet had uttered some prediction, he would naturally be anxious for its fulfillment; but if it were not fulfilled, the Lord imputes it to the hand of his providence. I the Lord have deceived him, that is, I have deceived his hopes of its fulfillment.

The deception does not refer to his prediction, but to its fulfillment; because the deceiving is after the prophet has uttered his prophecy, and can therefore only relate to the fulfillment of it. See Jer. iv. 10; xiv. 10; xx. 7.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 2. Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations.

The language of this command, "To cause Jerusalem to know," seems like requiring of the prophet the performance of an impossibility. Many other commands have a similar appearance, as "Make you a new heart." Ezek. xviii. 31. Jer. i. 10.

The designation, Son of man, by which the prophet designates himself, is the same as that by which the Messiah, in his humility, distinguished himself.

This command would be fulfilled by the prophets informing the people of the city of the great evil of their conduct toward the Lord. Isa. lviii. 1. 1 Tim. v. 20.

This is a duty that may not be omitted nor imperfectly performed. Lev. xix. 17.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 9. But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them.

The same sentiment is here expressed that Moses used in his expostulation for Israel. Num. xiv. 13. If God destroyed

his people, the Egyptians should hear it, and take occasion to reproach the Lord. Josh. vii. 9.

25. Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.

All these statutes that were not good were not effectual with them.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 2. Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the bloody city? yea, thou shalt show her all her abominations.

The prophet was to judge, and to condemn the city of Jerusalem. And he was to do it in the name of the Lord—by the divine authority. He was to preach to the people the divine law, their disobedience to it, their sin against divine goodness, and the judgments that were coming upon them. So the apostles were to retain and remit sins; only ministerially, and by the authority of God; and only as they were inspired, or instructed by the divine word to do it. But they were never to do it on their own account, not at their own will, but only as required of God. John x. 25; vii. 28. If Jesus was thus limited by his instructions, how rather should we be in such solemn and responsible transactions, as judging men, retaining and remitting sins. This office of showing men their sins, and the judgments that await them, is both arduous and painful; and for which many lack moral courage and evangelical valor. Nathan valiantly performed it to David, when he said, *Thou art the man*. 2 Sam. xii. 1-7. Jeremiah faithfully performed it to Zedekiah, John the Baptist to Herod, Christ to the Jews, Stephen to his persecutors; and the hosts of sacred heroes, whose records adorn the sacred pages; and if poets on earth have commemorated their noble deeds which so far surpass the deeds of bloody heroes, as to be engraved on the imperishable tablets of eternal glory, and show forever, "That he who ruleth his own spirit does more than he that taketh a city." Jer. xxxviii. 15-18. Matt. xiv. 14. John viii. 44. Matt. xxiii. 33. Acts vii. 51. Heb. xi. 1-40.

But their virtues would not have appeared with such complete luster, were they not set off by the persecutions of which

they were warned, and which they suffered. The Lord told them, saying, "If they have persecuted me they will persecute you." John xv. 20.

Although they knew that piety and faithfulness to the Master insured persecution from the wicked world; yet none of these things hindered them any more than the soldier is hindered by the bloody carnage that awaits him. Acts xx. 24.

Men ought to receive the preaching of divine truth, as a message of love sent from heaven to enlighten and instruct a poor benighted world with docility, with meekness, with gratitude, with profound awe, and great fear; for they must give account to God for the privilege. How plainly is the truth inculcated in the word, that they who receive Christ's messengers receive him. Matt. x. 15-40. John viii. 47. In directing Moses to consecrate Joshua, the Lord said, "And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient." Num. xxvii. 20.

"And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, if ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened." Jer xxvi. 4, 5.

Notwithstanding all those commandments to hear God's servants, carnal men everywhere refuse to hear them. Look at all the heresies and false doctrine that so abound even in Christendom, where the servants of God are everywhere proclaiming God's word, and where carnal men are rejecting it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VERSE 2. Son of man, speak to the children of thy people.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God: the words being inspired as well as the ideas. Isa. li. 16. *These words* many times only suggest the subject, as many other words would suggest, and equally as well, as far as we can perceive. But we may not presume that the Holy Spirit did not have good cause for choosing the words adopted. And the purposes in view, in this selection, will be accomplished by his own hand, although they be unknown to us.

The phrase, *Son of man*, suggests the prophet Ezekiel, but for all we can perceive, the word Ezekiel, or prophet, or the son of Buzi, would have suggested the same person. "*My*

people," suggests the people of the Hebrews ; but how many other names are used in revelation for the same people ; and with the same divine authority : how often does the Lord call them *My people*, which in this passage would to us have the same meaning. But God's thoughts are not our thoughts.

Inspired men did not select the language in which the ideas are expressed ; for, if they did then what was revealed would not be his words.

One prophet was inspired to use one class of words, and another to use a different class of words to express the sense. Matt. xxvii. 45. Mark xv. 25. Luke xxiii. 44.

Again, one inspired writer is inspired to use different words to express or suggest the same subject. By revealing in different words the same thing affords an explanation, that is helpful, as Heb. vii. 2. Rev. ix. 11.

Different names are used for the same person, as Peter, Cephas, Simon for the Apostle ; and Thaddeus, Lebbeus, Judas for another apostle ; and Nathaniel, Bartholomew for another ; and Thomas, Didymus for another ; and Saul who is also called Paul, and the Apostle of the Gentiles, for another. Acts xiii. 10. Jehovah, God, the Almighty Father in Heaven, Creator, and Lord, and Preserver, are designations used by different writers for the King of kings. The Messiah has many names employed by different inspired writers, as they were directed by the Divine Spirit.

3. If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people.

If a man hold this charge of watchman, he has a great responsibility, for life and death are suspended upon his faithfulness or unfaithfulness in its execution. How preposterous is the cavil of some against the use of means, when every one knows that life and death are suspended upon them ; for he who will not eat to nourish his body must die ; and the woman that will not convert her flour into bread, it will remain flour, and if she will not cook her dinner it will remain raw. If no one builds houses there will not be any. If no persons build ships, there will not be any built, nor any commerce or navigation.

13. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live ; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity.

The cavil that the elect will be saved, let them do ever so ill, is here contradicted on divine authority. But the only

safety of the righteous is in their not doing the iniquity and their being kept from it, 1 Pet. i. 5; for if they do it they will be eternally lost; the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and he will make it good. But all these warnings are given to save him from the iniquity, that he may take warning, use the means and live, for if he do not he will perish. But the warning can be made a savor of life unto life to him; and will be; he shall live because he is warned. Ezek. iii. 21. 1 Cor. x. 13. Job xvii. 9. It is kind in God thus to warn his children and make the warning effectual. Heb. vi. 4. But to make the warning effectual they must use means, or the warning will have no saving effect. Exod. ix. 19, 25.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

VERSE 23. And I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David.

David was not to be raised from the dead, but a man of his posterity would be raised up to occupy his throne.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

VERSE 22. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel.

Since the fall of Adam no man hath deserved any blessing from the divine hand; many poor, unworthy sinners have been rewarded for poor, imperfect services rendered to God, but such rewards were of grace, and for Christ's sake; and when those who received them deserved everlasting destruction from the presence of God and from the glory of his power. But the Sovereign would prove his goodness and his grace, and would encourage poor sinners in endeavors to serve him although all their righteousnesses are, and must be as filthy rags. Isa. lxiv. 67. Luke xvii. 10. Ezek. xxix. 18, 19. Jer. xxvii. 6-8.

25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness.

Moses had sprinkled blood and water upon the people and upon all things used in ceremonial worship. And this continued during that dispensation. But here the prophet is predicting that change to sprinkling clean water, which will be made under the gospel dispensation *upon you*, you who shall be God's people, which then will consist of both Jews and Gentiles, for the middle wall will then be removed. Eph. ii. 14. Matt. xxi. 43.

When priests sprinkled blood with scarlet wood and hyssop upon the polluted house it was declared to be clean, or sufficiently purified for all ceremonial purposes. So under the gospel dispensation the sprinkling with water shall be equally efficacious for all ceremonial purposes. And there does not seem to be anything under the gospel dispensation to which this prophecy can apply but the sacrament of baptism; we seem to be compelled so to understand it. If, therefore, we did not baptize by sprinkling, we could show nothing in the church that would answer this prophecy, and of course we could not be the gospel church alluded to by the prophet. Sprinkling then must be of real importance, if it is necessary to preserve the truth of prophecy, the truth and veracity of God. Isa. lii. 15. Num. xix. 13.

26. A new heart also will I give you.

A new heart is a gracious gift of God which was purchased by the Lord Jesus by his atoning sacrifice, and bestowed in regeneration in infinite mercy, and in free grace upon those for whom it was purchased. And it is not bestowed for any works of the subject, nor for anything done, or to be done by him, but alone and solely for what Christ has done.

Faith, however, is necessary to salvation, and is that grace which unites to Christ and takes hold of his salvation. But this faith is just as much the gift of God as regeneration is. This faith is not a work of righteousness, for it is that instrument which takes hold of Christ's righteousness, but it is no righteousness itself, else the righteousness of Christ would be unnecessary. And if faith be a gift of God, it can not be a righteousness of merit.

Although salvation is of faith and not of works, it is so of faith that it may be by grace. And although faith precedes salvation, yet it is necessarily in the order of nature, as salvation is annexed to faith in the promise, but faith is a necessary part of salvation, for all are saved who have it. It is not separated from salvation because it precedes it in the order of nature, for it is necessarily subsequent to regeneration. So repentance, in the order of nature, necessarily precedes faith in

Christ, as a man must necessarily know that he is sick and in need before he applies to a physician. Repentance is a view of our lost condition and a right feeling about it, else we should not come to Christ. We must feel our need of him, view his fitness, or not go to him. But although repentance be first, faith second, and glory be in the third place, yet they are one salvation, and are all indispensable.

If the sinner is commanded to make to himself a new heart and a right spirit, Ezek. xviii. 31, it is not because it is in the sinner's power to do it, nor because it is not exclusively the work of Omnipotence, Eph. i. 19; ii. 4, 10; but it is because it is the sinner's duty to be holy, for if it were not his duty to be holy then unholiness would not be wicked—sin would not be sin. Rom. viii. 7. Sin is evil and of its own nature deserving of death.

CHAPTER XLIV.

VERSE 7. In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary to pollute it.

If uncircumcised persons had been admitted to the sacred things of the Mosaic dispensation it would defile, pollute, profane the house of God. The Lord Jesus, therefore, had to conform to the ceremonial law in its every requirement. Matt. iii. 15.

A breach of the ceremonial law would be a pollution and sinful because it would be a breach of the commandment, for sin is lawlessness, that is the transgression of the law. Lev. xix. 23. It was this ceremonial law that Uzzah violated and that cost him his life. 2 Sam. vi. 7, 8. 1 Chron. xiii. 9-11. 1 Sam. vi. 19. Ceremonial profanity in holy things is now quite common and contemptuous to divine things. It would be pollution to admit an unbaptized person into the church; baptism is not the door, is not admission. Those who hold the keys, after a vote sustaining an examination, admit members to the church. This is the door, viz: the vote of the session.

Ministers, by some sects, have been admitted to the sacred office without the imposition of hands, and members have been admitted to communion without baptism, by profane and sacrilegious persons who must give account to the Head of the church. Verse 23. Dan. i. 8.

When a building is dedicated to the worship of God it is sacrilege to use it for any other purpose. No business meetings of any kind but devotional can be held therein. It is the Lord's house. Those who have omitted the consecration of their church on this account show that they have a conscience as do those who having consecrated theirs, confine its use to divine worship. No society of man's invention can be meetings held in the sacred inclosure. The religious society of communicants may meet there for worship and sacraments; but not for church business of any kind, because it is a sacred place. Matt. xxi. 12, 13. Mark xi. 15-18. The censers used sacrilegiously or profanely by Korah and his company were sanctified, made holy, by being used once in worship and were forever held sacred. Num. xvi. 37, 38. All men have not reverence for God and divine things. Isa. lxvi. 2. Dan. x. 7, 8.

DANIEL.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 9. Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

The Lord had purposes to accomplish by the eunuch's love for Daniel. By it Daniel avoided defiling himself, and although he was a bondman, he prevailed by the use of entreaty alone, paying to his master entire respect and humble submission, and with these he prevailed and prospered, for the Lord was with him and he was with God. And he walked humbly with God and men, as every truly pious man will do. The effect of his humble and submissive behavior was of God, as it is written, "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. xvi. 7.

Humble and submissive deportment is the beauty of piety, and secures the divine promise that all things shall work together for good to them who love God. Rom. viii. 28. How beautifully is this promise verified in the lives of Joseph and Daniel, who were as kind and faithful to their masters as they could have been to their parents. They never lost anything by doing so, for godliness is profitable unto all things. 1 Tim. iv. 6; vi. 6.



CHAPTER II.

VERSE 17. Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions.

When pious men are in trouble they go to God alone if they have none to sympathize with them, and lay their troubles before him, but if they have such they fraternize with them, and unite in prayer to the Father, as it is written, "Where two or three of you are gathered together in my name there am I." Matt. xviii. 20.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 17. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

We may look with reverence and admiration at the goodness of God in so inserting in many places the evidence of the Trinity, and so unexpectedly as to plainly appear to be done with design, that we may have the evidence, line upon line. The three designations, Watchers, Holy Ones and Most High (two being in the plural and one in the singular number), correspond to the Trinity in unity. So Alehim in the plural is joined to a verb in the singular number.

The Most High reigns in wicked kingdoms, as well as over wicked men; he sets up whom he will, and sets up the basest of men at times, and at other times the best, as David and Josiah. When it is said, "He sets the basest of men," we are not to understand that that is all he does, for it is only one of his works. Jas. i. 17. It is sin in the creature if he did not know; he who was guilty of the sin of ignorance was sinful, and had to offer his sacrifice. Job was for a time under the control of Satan physically, and for wise and good purposes. The Lord sets up the basest of men as a judgment, as it is said, "I gave them a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." Hos. xiii. 11.

Angels and men were created holy, and having rebelled and became depraved does not put them out of his jurisdiction or control. He takes the subjects of his kingdom out of the wicked generations of men whom he raises up and conserves for that purpose. If wicked nations were all destroyed there would be no materials for converts to his kingdom. These wicked kingdoms and wicked men are necessary also for the manifestation of his justice and the trial of his people, and showing their love to their souls, and displaying their zeal for their salvation, for if he should thus display his justice upon appropriate subjects, how could that attribute be known to his glory? and saints and angels be filled with love and joy? and chant alleluias? Rev. xix. 1-3.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 10. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chambers toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

He used no carnal stratagems to avoid detection, knowing that, as help must come from God, and from him only, he ought to be found in the way of well-doing. And his expectations were not disappointed.

Christians may and must disobey civil rulers in matters of fundamental importance. Acts v. 28-30.

27. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

How plainly does the great King reveal himself in his works, so that men and angels may know him. If the doctrines of grace are mysterious to carnal men, 1 Cor. ii. 14, yet his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen in his works, displayed before all men, so that they are without excuse for not loving and worshipping him. Rom. i. 20. Darius the Gentile clearly saw the hand of God in the deliverance of Daniel—and did not put his light under a vessel, but published it abroad that God might be honored and that all might be instructed, as Nebuchadnezzar had done. Chap. iii. 28.

Thus should all men honor the Most High. If they omit it they rob him of that glory which is his due. This is that for which Belshazzar was reproved, for he knew or ought to have known the great events of his father's reign, and yet he acted as if he were ignorant of them. Chap. v. 22, 23. His queen was not ignorant. And he had no excuse for indifference to events of such magnitude: it could only proceed from an evil heart of unbelief.

The works of creation, providence, and redemption should inspire all men with wonder, admiration and love.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 24. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

These seventy weeks, according to verse 25, are to commence at the time when the decree should be made to restore and to build Jerusalem, which is understood to be the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus, at the request of Nehemiah. They reach to Messiah the Prince, to the time when he was crucified, by which he was anointed effectually for his work of Mediator and Savior by bringing in everlasting righteousness for the salvation of his people; and including his anointing. Acts x. 38. John i. 32. All the particulars of this verse, as finishing transgression, making an end of sins, etc., all six relate to one event, the death of the Messiah.

It is not so easy to interpret the prophecies of revelation, as it is the historic and didactic parts of it which are less emblematical. As such prophecies are couched in emblems, symbols and figures, there is room for misinterpretation. In this prophecy of the seventy weeks, as the events have transpired, and are of a marked character, it is less difficult to adjust their chronology.

It seems that the prophecy was not intended to be given in such a manner, that the precise time of the events should be foreknown; but that they be hid as under a vail, until their fulfillment should lift the vail and thereby settle their interpretation.

This was no doubt wise, because if wicked men knew beforehand of the events, they might attempt to frustrate them, as Herod did by destroying the children of Bethlehem, Matt. ii. 16; and as the patriarchs attempted to prevent the fulfillment of Joseph's dreams. Gen. xxxvii. 20.

When the events have transpired it is easier to refer them to the prophecy that before noted them. John xii. 16. The solar years of these seventy weeks are fewer than the prophetic years of the Jewish calendar. And this is accounted for by the two facts that the calendar years, not only were shorter, and of course contained a greater number; but as the period is measured by weeks, and they being three divisions afford room for three fractions, which two facts afford ample

room to account for this seeming discrepancy ; as the last of the seventy weeks including the Messiah's ministry and crucifixion, make only four solar years ; for he was cut off in the midst of the week. Then as there were several decrees in favor of restoring Jerusalem, it becomes difficult to ascertain which of them is that from which the seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years commences.

But if we could not harmonize the four hundred and ninety years with our chronology, it would afford no ground for discrediting the prophecy : for Messiah did come, and was cut off, but not for himself. And all the particular events occurred as specified, as for any thing that can appear, exactly in accordance with the prophecy.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 7. And I Daniel alone saw the vision : for the men that were with me saw not the vision ; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

i. This resembles the vision of Saul of Tarsus recorded in Acts ix. 7 ; xxii. 9, as Saul's attendants neither saw nor heard what he saw and heard.

8. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me : for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

Although Daniel was a meek and humble saint, and had an abiding sense of his pollution as a sinner ; yet when this vision occasioned a realizing sense of the divine presence and majesty, it occasioned also a much deeper sense of his own vileness ; so that what before seemed comeliness in him was now corruption.

The humility that necessarily attends true piety, makes the child of God susceptible of very deep impressions in the house of God, and at the throne of grace, and whenever he is associated with divine things. v. 17.

11. And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright : for unto thee am I now sent. And

when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

In the catalogue of Bible saints the prophet Daniel shines with peculiar luster. His deep and genuine piety appears in the angel's declaring that he was greatly beloved; and it also appears in his standing trembling before the holy angel who came on a message from God. The fear of God is declared to be the beginning of wisdom. His devout piety filled him with reverence while the message from heaven is spoken to him. This fear was not the fear of being lost, but the fear of the Holy One, who is of infinite majesty, and in whose sight the heavens are unclean. It is filial fear. While perfect love casteth out fear, it is the fear that hath torment, not that which worketh by reverence and love. 1 John iv. 18. Ps. xxxi. 19; xxxvi. 1; lxiv. 4; lxx. 5; cxi. 10; cxix. 63. Eccl. iii. 14. Isa. xxiii. 5. Jer. xxxii. 39. Mal. iv. 2. Matt. x. 28.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 2. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

From this and other passages, it is evident that the Jews were acquainted with the doctrine of the resurrection, and the future states of happiness and misery. The prophet is here referring to the coming and resurrection of Christ, when many rose from the dead. Matt. xxvii. 52. Job xix. 26. Isa. xxvi. 19.

HOSEA.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 10. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which can not be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

This is interpreted as a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles. Rom. ix. 25, 26. Hos. ii. 23.

11. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

In verse 6, the prophet had shown that God would no more have mercy upon the house of Israel. But here they are to be gathered with Judah, and to be one people with him. And both unite in appointing their ruler. This corresponds with Ezekiel xxxvii. 17-19; for though the house of Israel, as ten distinct tribes, were no more to be a nation, yet an election of them was merged with the people of Judah and Benjamin. 2 Chron. xi. 13-17.

During the reign of Rehoboam vast multitudes of the ten tribes, shocked with the idolatry of Jeroboam, forsook him and went over to Judah, and have ever since remained identified with Judah and Benjamin. Therefore the ten tribes, though lost as a nation, 2 Chron. xi. 12-16; Amos vii. 11; Hos. i. 6, are not lost as being known as the seed of Abraham, the children of the covenant. All the twelve tribes are remaining. This explains why the Epistle of James is not addressed to Judah and Benjamin, but to the twelve tribes as consolidated. For the same reason the apostle speaks of "our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night." Jas. i. 1. Acts. xxvi. 7.

Jehu was commissioned to make destruction at Jezreel:

and did it faithfully. But he did it delighting in human slaughter, and thus he displeased the Lord; for to obey with an evil heart is sin. Num. xxii. 22. Great would be the day when the Sovereign should destroy the house of Israel, the ten tribes, for the blood so wantonly shed at Jezreel and Samaria; although it would all have been right had it been done with a right spirit. Hos. i. 4. This great day has a reference also to the kingdom of Messiah under the gospel dispensation; for it is made to synchronize with the conversion of the Gentiles, v. 10. Isa. xi. 10-13. Jer. iii. 17, 18. There is, therefore, no discrepancy between verses 6, 10, 11 of Hosea, chap. 1.

Great blessings were in reserve for the pious Hebrews who had belonged to the ten tribes but had deserted them, but none for the kingdom of Ephraim, or the ten tribes as an independent nation.

We ought to obey all the divine precepts. But obedience of love and faith only is acceptable.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 13. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good.

The Most High had appointed a place at which the nation should worship him. It should have been esteemed as the greatest privilege to conform to the divine requirements. But instead of this they consulted their own pleasure in the manner of attending upon these ordinances; and received a curse instead of a blessing. If they believed that if they only performed the service it was immaterial where. But they were entirely mistaken. 2 Thess. ii. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 16.

14. I will not punish your daughters.

He would not send judgments upon them in this world to reclaim them; but would give them up to their own way, and to take the consequences in the other world. Verse 17.

19. The wind hath bound her up in her wings.

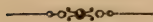
Their destruction is compared to a tempest that would carry them away, and utterly destroy them.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 6. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.

Although it is a principle that they who seek shall find; yet it must also be true, that those who have sinned away their day of grace, or who have committed the unpardonable sin, are exceptions to that rule. Prov. i. 28. Luke xiii. 24. See comment on those passages.

AMOS.



CHAPTER II.

VERSE 7. That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid.

Depravity is generally exhibited as an association of vices; covetousness and incest are here associated. They would grind and wrong the poor; and would extort from them even the smallest amount of property, as if they coveted even the dust that fell upon their heads. With the humble inoffensive and meek man or woman would deal unjustly, and make merchandise of them as far as possible. Among them there was not that honor that is sometimes found among thieves.

And to crown their depravity the prophet adds the charge of incest. It seems worthy of such an unnatural and wicked man as Absalom, who drove his father from the throne to go in unto his father's concubines.

Whether any form of marriage was observed or not is not mentioned by the prophet about the son and the father going in unto the same maid; for the crime of incest must equally obtain.

Silence is at times very expressive, and most significant. When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, they most eloquently expressed their feelings by silence. When the evangelist informs us of John the Baptist charging Herod with incest, not a word is said of his brother Philip's being yet living: the silence shows that that fact had no bearing on the crime of incest, which was the same whether Philip were living or not.

There was a single exception made by the Levirate law. That a husband's brother, or nearest relative should marry the widow of a brother who died childless.

This provision was made for state purposes, that a man's inheritance might not go out of his family; and had no effect upon the general prohibition. It gave no liberty for a man to marry his father's wife. 1 Cor. v. 1. A man may not ap-

proach unto a brother's widow. Lev. xviii. 16; nor to a wife's mother, daughter or granddaughter, whether they have been married or not; or whether the man have lost his wife or not. The silence shows that these points are irrelevant.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth.

Of all the families—nations—of the earth, you only have I chosen or taken as a peculiar inheritance to me; and to enjoy peculiar favor. Know is used in this sense. Matt. vii. 23.

10. For they know not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.

They did not know the beauty of holiness, nor the necessity of uprightness. Whatever sense they might have had of wrong and right, that sense had now become so seared by indulgence in sin, that it became dead and inoperative.

How dangerous and ruinous is the temerity of indulgence in sin till conscience loses its power, so that a man is like a beast as to his sense of moral right and wrong. His eternal ruin seems to be sealed upon him.

O B A D I A H.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 10. For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever.

Edom was the country inhabited by the descendants of Esau, who was Jacob's brother, and who treated the people of Israel malevolently, as if they were as the heathen nations, cruelly engaging in wars against them. Ps. cxxxvii. 7. Jer. li. 35. Deut. xxiii. 4. Matt. xxv. 40, 45. 1 John iii. 10. The greatness of the crime against Jacob consisted in their being God's people. It had been sinful if it had been against any other nation; for God's law requires all men to love one another; and even to love enemies, but especially our kindred, and the children of God. Luke viii. 21.

J O N A H .



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 4. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken.

This tempest was an expression of the Lord's displeasure at the disobedience of Jonah. But all on board the ship suffered the danger with him, until they with his advice separated him from them; and then the storm and the danger ceased.

We are here taught that there is no escaping the divine hand; for He is in every place, and will by no means clear the guilty. If we ascend to the clouds of heaven, dive to the bottom of the sea, or flee to the end of the earth, we will not escape from Him.

All the elements are in His hand and ready to be made the instruments of his pleasure. Pharaoh experienced this when he refused to let Israel go. Exod. xiv. 26, 27. The use of the preposition *into* in this passage is instructive; into the sea, and in the sea, or on the sea, would all convey the same idea in this place, as into the land means over the land. Matt. ix. 26. See also Num. xiii. 17. Deut. xxxii. 49. Judges iii. 27. Amos iv. 1. John iv. 20, 21. In these places, in the mountain and into the mountain mean no more than on the mountain.

That the Lord sent a wind into the sea does not mean into the water of the sea. So if John baptized in Jordan it would not infer any more than within the banks of the river Jordan.

ZECHARIAH.



CHAPTER II.

VERSE 11. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people.

There are so many passages which relate to the calling of the Gentiles to their ultimate enjoyment of evangelical privileges with the Jews, that it becomes important to ascertain their import, to see their coherence and learn the rule of exegesis. When a nation, or a tribe, or a people are referred to in general terms, they are considered as a whole, are taken as a mass; and the promise or the thing affirmed of them is fulfilled whenever the affirmation is verified to any part of that nation, or people or mass. This is shown to be the meaning of *many nations* in this passage, for an apostle has so expounded it with all such passages. "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name." Acts xv. 14. Here we see that when God took out of the Gentiles about twenty-four persons in the house of Cornelius, he had visited the Gentiles. Acts xv. 14. Rev. vii. 9. It was promised to Abraham that in his seed all families of the earth should be blessed, or all the nations of the earth, for both are of the same import. Gen. xviii. 18. This prediction has been fulfilled in the days of the apostles and since, if only a very few individuals of the various nations have received the gospel. The promises to Abraham that God would bless his seed, are fulfilled when only some of his seed are so blessed, although a vast many of them have remained destitute of that blessing, being hardened in unbelief, for it is written, "They are not all Israel that are of Israel." Rom. ix. 6.

The promise was to his seed as a body of people, and not to each individual of that body, for many generations perished before Christ came, and although some of every generation who were Jews inwardly did partake of the promise, yet a vast many seem never to have enjoyed it. Luke xvii. 25. Mark viii. 31. Luke vii. 30. John i. 11. So when it is said the Jews sought the more to kill him. John v. 18. Although

it is spoken of the Jews as a body, we know that it means no more than that some of the Jews sought to kill him; for John the Baptist, and the apostles, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Lazarus were Jews and of them none sought to kill him. Probably not one out of ten of the Jews sought to kill him, yet the passage is true if any of them sought to kill him. But it would not be true if we interpret it to mean that all the Jews so sought. So where the word all is used if we interpret it to mean every individual, we shall make revelation teach falsehood in many cases. So scribes and elders.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 10. For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbor.

We do not doubt but that there was a general display of this treachery and malevolence in Israel at that time. And there were exceptions, but the prophet is not allowed to divert their minds by stating them, nor to encumber the subject with them, although the prophet knew that he himself was an exception, and that other prophets and pious men in Jerusalem also were exceptions.

The sovereignty of God both over good and evil men is a common doctrine of revelation. He that does not receive it rejects the word of God. He that does not believe it does not believe God. And he that does not know it does not know God, for this doctrine is as fundamental as it is common, for this sovereignty is one of his attributes.

The afflictions that were laid upon Jerusalem were so heavy that laborers, depending on labor for daily bread, could not get employment and of course suffered for want of the necessities of life.

If sinners have all forfeited the divine favor, then he can justly send upon them strong delusions so that they will rise against each other, or any other judgment, as he has often. 1 Sam. xiv. 16; Judges vii. 22; or he can cut them off as cumberers of the ground and appoint them their portion with the wicked in eternal death.

MALACHI.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 6. A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master.

This is a declaration of a principle, a duty, rather than an assertion of a universal fact, for although all persons, young and advanced, should honor their parents, yet Ham did not honor his father as Shem and Japheth did. Absalom and Adonijah did not honor their father as Solomon did. Neither do all servants honor their masters as some do and all should. Hence we clearly perceive that what seems to be stated as matter of historic fact, is only as a principle to which our attention is called.

It may be useful to observe that the duty of children to their parents and of servants to their masters is on the same foundation, so that they are equal, one being as holy as the other and one being oppression as much as the other. Eph. vi. 1-8. 1 Tim. vi. 1-5.

When slavery is so often mentioned in both Testaments for illustration and for legislation, it is never once disapproved. This is a fact of significance to those who love the truth and search for it.

This point is proved by Israel's being directed to take bondmen of the Gentiles. Lev. xxv. 44, 45. 1 Kings ix. 21, 22. Josh. ix. 22, 23. Num. xxxi. 30, 40. Exod. xxi. 21. This point is clearly established, though incidentally, Prov. xii. 9, where it is said, "He that is despised and hath a servant, is better than he that honoreth himself and lacketh bread." If slavery be sinful then the wise man was foolish to teach that sin is better than want. No wonder that we are warned so to teach that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. 1 Tim. vi. 1.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 5. My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

Fear is an essential Christian grace. It is not so much the fear of eternal perdition as it is awe and reverence.

7. For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

It is the indispensable requisite of a minister of the gospel, as the administrator of God's word and ordinances, that he declare the truth. He may not consult his imagination nor the imagination of others, but he must teach the truth of God and only the truth. Else how shall his hearers that hang upon his lips secure their own salvation? for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound who shall prepare himself to the battle? 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

They who hear have a right to look to him for the divine word faithfully exhibited in all its moral bearings. He may not deal in conjectures or suppositions, but must labor and toil and pray until he find the truth and then declare it. He may not quote what others think is the truth but what he has ascertained to be the truth.

Levi, who is here the subject of remark, was to minister God's truth in God's name. If any one preach at a funeral, he may not preach either the virtues or the vices of the deceased, for neither of them would be preaching the divine word. What is revealed of God is all that he is commissioned to preach. He may not take up the Tract Society, the Missionary Society, or the Bible Society as a subject, nor any other scheme of man's devising into the sacred desk. But remembering that, as he is a messenger of God he must be about his Father's business, and that not in words that man's wisdom teacheth but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; 1 Cor. ii. 13; therefore, he may not introduce singing by saying, "Let us sing to the praise of —," for the hearer understands that. Neither may he introduce reading the word by saying, "Let us read for our instruction," for the audience knows that the portion of divine oracles is read for devout meditation without being informed. Every vain and foolish word should be omitted from these solemnities as desecrations, and every

thing that is introduced, and every air and manner assumed should be in keeping with the solemnity of the place and the sacredness of the employment.

The number of the psalm or hymn should be mentioned, to enable the hearers to turn to it, and the chapter and book may be mentioned for the same reason.

14. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth.

This address is to the people, the nation, although, perhaps, not applicable to the tenth part of them. When two persons are united in the marriage covenant, it is a breach of the covenant to separate for those trivial causes for which divorces are commonly granted. And it is treachery to the vow they have taken, for it was for life. If they are divorced as above, all the obligations remain upon them as really as if they had not been divorced; yet is she thy companion and the wife of thy covenant. If either of the parties marry after such a divorce, although this marriage be adultery and releases the other party, it does not render the divorce right, nor hinder that marriage from being adultery. Matt. v. 32.

The marriage relation being entered into for life can not be dissolved by mutual consent, nor by any disagreement or dislike. If they do separate they must remain single and alone the rest of their lives, unless they return to each other. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Neither party can contract another marriage without incurring excommunication. Matt. xix. 9.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 16. Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

There is also a close connection and dependence of all the graces that constitute the Christian, so that the Christian is designated by some of these graces at one time, and by others at other times. Yet their Christian characters are substantially the same whatever be the graces by which they be distinguished. They differ in the degrees of piety, or the development of their graces, as Abraham had great faith, Job great patience, Moses great meekness and John great love.

In this verse the child of God is spoken of as fearing the Lord, thinking about him, having deep, solemn and impressive thoughts upon divine subjects and speaking often about them to brethren. By this means their love and fellowship would be nourished and increased. The Lord would observe it, remember it, and make this Christian or pious communion bear fruit to his glory. John xv. 5, 16. And they would never be forgotten, but would be kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Heb. iii. 12, 13. 1 Pet. i. 5.

MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 21. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

All people, all nations are the Lord's; for he made them and made them for himself. Prov. xvi. 4. But when He speaks of a part of mankind being his, of course they must be his in a peculiar relation or respect; they are his in a covenant relation between the persons of the Trinity; in which the Father was to give certain individuals of our lost race to the Son, to be redeemed by his intercession and death; and the Holy Spirit was to apply this salvation by making these so given willing in the day when he should put forth his power for this purpose. Jesus was to pour out his soul unto death; the Father engaged that the Son should see his seed and be satisfied: and that he should have the heathen for his inheritance. Ps. cx. 3. Isa. liii. 10, 11. Ps. ii. 8. All that were given to the Son in this covenant were the Father's. John xvii. 6.

This covenant and stipulation regard them, not as believers, but as wicked and ungodly men to be washed by atoning blood, and to be justified freely through grace. John xvii. 9, 20, 24. They were God's people from the moment the covenant was made and that moment was the eternity past, and there never was a moment when it was not yet made.

God's people are those who were chosen of God to be made both subjects of grace and heirs of glory. Rom. viii. 34. John xvii. 2, 3.

They are those whom God did foreknow. Rom. viii. 29.

They are the sheep for whom he died. John x. 11, 15.

The sheep designate the elect, as the goats do the non-elect or reprobate. Matt. xxv. 31-34.

That the Lord's claim upon them does not arise from their faith or being believers, is evident from the term being applied to them who *should be* converts and were yet heathen. John x. 16. He had a claim upon them by election or choice, so that they were his before they were created, and of course be-

fore they were believers; and in the order of nature they were his before they were given to the Son in the covenant of redemption to be sanctified, justified, saved. It is true the claim applies to them after they have become believers, for it is equally applicable.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

Their wisdom seems to have been prophetic, else how could they know that the unusual star which they saw in the west denoted the advent of the Messiah? They being in the east, saw his star in the west. The merciful kindness to Israel is strongly evinced in this evidence given to the people of Jerusalem that their long expected Messiah had come. And how plainly was this evidence confirmed when Herod murdered all the children in Bethlehem because he believed that the Messiah was born there; for they would naturally think that it would require strong evidence to lead to such barbarity.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea.

The prophecy was so clear that the chief priests and scribes knew both the time and place of his birth.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt.

How incompetent are sinners to understand divine things Herod, the king, was going to counteract and prevent God's purposes, not knowing that his counsel shall stand, and that he will do all his pleasure. Isa. xlv. 10. Ps. xxxiii. 11. Prov. xix. 21.

Such ignorance leads to such presumption. While the children of folly are plotting against the Lord, he is steadily carrying out his purposes with as much success as if there were no opposition. Herod thought he was making sure work in destroying the king of the Jews by destroying all the children in Bethlehem. Did he suppose that God would not know? or knowing, would do nothing to protect and save his beloved Son?

It is worthy of remark here, that God uses means to accomplish his purposes, which proves that such means are necessary, and that he does not govern the world by physical power alone, but by moral power and moral means, or in other words, he deals with men as free agents.

And what shows this point with great force is, that means are used to counteract what Herod was going to do if not prevented. Therefore, the Lord sent the babe to Egypt. How plain it is, then, that the world is not governed by fate, necessity or physical power, but by moral means and free moral agency; for Herod was going to destroy all the children in Bethlehem and did do it, did accomplish it. And he would have destroyed Jesus if he had not been taken away. It surely has this appearance, else why was he taken away? If he was not in danger of being destroyed why was he taken away? He might just as well have been left where he was, if means were not to be used to deliver him.

Such plain facts, and the world is full of them, show that God controls the world by means, and he deals with men and with beasts as free agents, the one as a free moral agent, and the other a free natural agent.

The moral law proves man to be a moral agent, for otherwise the moral law had never been given him.

Men and other animals are not governed by moral means alone, because they could not have been governed by physical power alone, although that would have made it an entirely different world, and would have prevented all the glorious displays of that moral system which has been adopted in the government of intelligent creatures.

In the very beginning man was forbidden to eat of a certain tree, was warned of the consequence of transgression, and then was left to the freedom of his own will to eat or not as he might determine, and did not eat without his own deliberate choice to do so.

But it would be erroneous to suppose that the Sovereign is restricted to the use of moral means alone, for now with fallen men and fallen angels moral means are not sufficient, and physical means become necessary and are indispensable. Pharaoh would not obey the command to let Israel go until physical means—the ten plagues—brought him to submission. It is also written, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." This infers more than moral means. It refers to infinite spiritual power that is also necessary in regeneration. Eph. i. 19, 20.

Independent, however, of regeneration, the Sovereign exer-

cises daily and hourly physical power over every creature, without which they could neither live nor act at all.

And when we consider man as a fallen creature, deserving only the divine wrath, we see that any kind of dealing with him is just, and that anything short of that misery even now is infinite mercy. Wicked men may be left to delirium, to self-destruction, to be delivered to Satan, 1 Tim. i. 20; and as Job was. Chap. i. 12; ii. 6.

A heathen army is sometimes destroyed by an angel, as 2 Kings xix. 35. Another destroys itself. 1 Sam. xiv. 16. Another is destroyed by its enemies. Judges iv. 16. But all these were under the providence of the Divine Sovereign, who hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth.

22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream.

Joseph had been warned of God in a dream in Egypt to return to the land of Israel, but, notwithstanding that warning, he was afraid to return to Judea, because his faith was weak, and therefore turned aside into Galilee, which was in the land of Israel. He did not have a second warning, or it is not so said.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 2. And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Kingdom of heaven—gospel dispensation was near.

5. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.

Jerusalem, all Judea and all the region around Jordan, do not mean that the places themselves went out to him, but that many of the people of these regions went. Luke vii. 30.

9. And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

It is presumption in men to depend on a false religion, or a

false God and thus secure their destruction. Thus the Jews depended on their being descendants from Abraham, which without internal piety would only render them apostates from the covenant.

11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.

There seems to be no need of that darkness with which some have enveloped this subject. The baptism of John was entirely a different thing from gospel baptism, for it was under the Mosaic dispensation, as John's whole ministry was. His baptism was unto repentance, before repentance, while gospel baptism is after repentance. John's baptism was to enjoin obligation upon the disciples to the future duty of believing on a Savior to come, to be manifested, gospel baptism was a confession that the Savior had come and had suffered and risen again. Besides John's baptism was with water, showing that water was the instrument used in the ceremony. If water were the instrument used, then it was not by immersion, for in immersion water is not an instrument, the person baptized is the instrument, he being plunged into water.

Besides gospel baptism was not instituted until after our Lord's resurrection. Matt. xxviii. 19. John's baptism was not in the name of the Trinity; but gospel baptism was to be in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

How John's baptism was administered we do not know. But as he baptized with water, putting water upon the subjects, using water as the instrument is all we know of the mode of his baptism. As it was not a gospel ordinance it was of no importance to us. If it had been of importance to us, we would have been informed about the mode. But this we know, that there is not an instance of immersion for baptism given us in the New Testament. Neither is there a precept for it. If it be both without precept and without example in the gospel, it can have no foundation.

13. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

The baptism which John administered was not a gospel ordinance at all. This is manifest from Paul's administering gospel baptism to those who had received John's baptism; Acts xix. 1-6, showing that John's baptism was of no account under the gospel dispensation. The same is also shown by the rebaptizing of all the converts on the day of Pentecost

although many of them had received John's baptism. Matt. iii. 5, 6, 8.

John's baptism was under the Jewish dispensation as was all his ministry. So also was our Lord's ministry wholly under the Jewish dispensation, which ended only with his suffering on the cross, and which dispensation he then took out of the way, nailing it to his cross. Col. ii. 14.

John the Baptist never received water baptism. It was not necessary for him. A prophet who institutes an ordinance may administer it to others if suitable, but he need not receive it himself. So Christ did not need to receive the baptism of John, because it was not applicable to him, as he had nothing to repent of, and could not need to be enjoined to believe on himself when he should be manifested. Strange infatuation to have John's baptism administered to the Lord to enjoin upon him the duty of believing on himself. Well then John's baptism could not be administered to our Lord, because it was not applicable, as he had nothing to repent of, and as it would be absurd to enjoin upon him the duty of believing on himself. And he did not administer gospel baptism to Christ; because gospel baptism was not yet instituted. It would be unseemly for John to commence the administration of a sacrament before it was instituted. Whoever will duly consider this subject will know that the gospel ordinance of baptism was not instituted until the Lord rose from the dead. See Matt. xxviii. 19. It would have seemed strange for John to administer baptism to Jesus, three years before the ordinance was instituted. Do men want to disgrace the glorious gospel by involving it in absurdity?

For what object did our Lord seek baptism? The evangelist intimates it plainly enough. Matt. iii. 15. John saw that it would be absurd and unmeaning to administer his baptism to the Lord, and objected to it on the ground that it was more suitable for Christ to baptize him. And the Lord said, Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. There is no room for doubt that this was the righteousness of the law; for Moses washed Aaron with water to induct him into the high priesthood. And as attaining to the age of thirty years was necessary to receiving that office the whole thing becomes perfectly clear. Why is it said that Jesus began to be about thirty years of age in connection with his coming to John for baptism, if it had no relation to it. Luke iii. 23. When Christ our high priest became thirty years of age, then he came to John for baptism; for only the washing, for only the application of water, which was all that the Lord wanted without any respect to the object of John's baptism:

the application of water from John who was a prophet as well as was Moses, would be as valid for Jesus as the washing of Moses was for Aaron: and it was as necessary for Christ as it was for Aaron; and therefore Jesus insisted upon it. And John perceiving the necessity, consented. John declined it until he was shown the necessity, and then he consented. Why was it said in connection with Christ's coming to John, that he began to be about thirty years of age, if the fact of his being thirty years of age had nothing to do with it? The whole taken together makes the matter clear and intelligible; for Jesus could not assume the office of high priest until he arrived at the age of thirty years.

These facts are all recorded together in connection with the subject that their bearing upon it may be obvious. His washing with water was as suitable as his circumcision. But the subject is not exhausted, there is still another no less significant. When the Jews demanded of Christ by what authority he cleansed the temple, he asked them about the baptism of John, whence it was, from heaven or of men? clearly intimating that the point related to the subject; and when they refused to answer him, he refused to answer them. Matt. xxi. 24. If John had inducted Jesus into the office of the high priesthood, then referring the Jews to John's baptism for the answer to their question was intelligible; for it was as much as to say, that John by the application of water had inducted him into the high priesthood as Moses did Aaron. There appears to be no room for any doubt upon this subject, unless we close our eyes against the light.

That the ministry both of John and of Christ were under the law, under the ceremonial dispensation, is evident from the fact that Christ enjoined obedience to it, and carefully practiced that obedience, eating the passover to the end of his ministry. And besides we are told when that dispensation terminated. Luke xxii. 7, 15. Col. ii. 14. Matt. v. 18.

If John's baptism was under the law, and baptism in the name of the Trinity was under the gospel, under another dispensation, then nothing can be learned from one of them respecting the other, seeing they were different things, and under different dispensations.

16. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.

The original Greek is *apo udatos*, the meaning of which is from the water; hence there is no evidence that either he or John went into the water; but only down to the edge of it. John could have taken up water and poured it upon him.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

The kingdom here spoken of is the same that John the Baptist referred to when he said, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Although the gospel dispensation could not commence until Christ should suffer and die on the cross; yet Christ could preach about it, and declare many things respecting it as near at hand, while the whole Mosaic code was remaining in all its force. Gal. iii. 8.

Isaiah preached so much about the gospel during the Mosaic dispensation, that he has been called the evangelical prophet. Under the Mosaic dispensation much was preached about the gospel dispensation by prophets who did not live under it; just as we may now say much about the Jewish dispensation, although we do not live under it. So Mark i. 1, entitles his gospel, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ," because it is the beginning of the history of the gospel.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Their poverty of spirit is not a righteousness for which they deserve salvation; for nothing can be such righteousness but the work of Christ. Those who are poor in spirit have salvation therein; for that poverty of spirit is what they are saved unto, and is salvation. It is their regeneration, their sanctification. It is their white stone with a new name. It is not that they deserve salvation; but that God in grace bestows it upon them of his grace, and as a free gift.

The poor sinner under a sense of guilt, vileness and unworthiness willingly accepts of Christ as his only righteousness by an abiding faith, and is therein a child of God. He is blessed and shall be blessed; for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those who are pure in heart, have the righteousness of faith, are the children of God, and will ascend to eternal rest. If some who are unrighteous, and unrenewed, are persecuted, their persecution argues nothing; but if they are persecuted for godliness, it is a passport to everlasting rest; for piety proves regeneration and election.

13. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?

The holy people of God are his church for whose sake the world is preserved from destruction, as Sodom and its sister cities would have been preserved if ten righteous men had been found in them.

In another respect Christians are the salt of the earth. Their piety influences others to become pious. The apostles' prayers and preaching were the means of the conversion of thousands on the day of Pentecost, and during their whole lives. And in like manner they were the light of the world.
v. 14.

17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

If it has been thought that the gospel has been introduced to mitigate the law, or lessen its severity, or the rigors of divine justice, as if God and justice might change, it is a ruinous mistake. The Lord Jesus came on an errand of mercy, to open the treasures of grace, and to open a fountain for sin and uncleanness to wash it away; that justice might have all her demands, and that the ungodly might be washed as clean and as white as snow or as wool.

20. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The Scribes and Pharisees had much faith in the truth of the scriptures, a strong belief that excited them to great zeal in religion. Their religion was an active principle; it was far from being inactive. They were absorbed in religious things, carried away with them. And yet they were worth nothing; even worse than nothing. Their religion could not take them to heaven because it did not fit them for it; for it was without

love to God or love to men. 1 Cor. i. 1, 2, 3. James teaches us that faith without works is dead; and Paul teaches the same when he says, "And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Faith without regeneration is only a dead and worthless display of hypocrisy. In this Paul and all the inspired writers are agreed. And they also are agreed in the proposition, that true faith is saving. True faith worketh by love; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. Acts viii. 20, 21. Isa. lxxv. 5. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 8. Matt. vii. 22, 23, 24. Heb. xii. 14. James ii. 19. John viii. 31; x. 27. Matt. xxii. 11.

31. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.

Because of the hardness of their hearts the Hebrews were indulged with divorces, which was evidently an irregularity; as the Lord indulged Lot with the privilege of Zoar, which was not best. Gen. xix. 17-21.

But under the gospel dispensation such divorces for insufficient causes are not to be granted.

32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

We know that there is only one justifiable cause for a divorce.

We also know that a divorce for any other cause is of no force; but is a mere nullity.

We further learn that the frequency of divorces for insufficient causes shows a great corruption of public morals; and that the parties to them have a great account to render for trifling with so serious and so sacred a subject.

The marriage covenant is for life; and can not be broken without great sin. Mal. ii. 14-16. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

37. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

Let your affirmation be a simple statement, as that, it is so, without any addition, affirmation, or asseveration; for any such addition to confirm it, as if your word were not sufficient, is evil.

An oath or confirmation in civil matters, as required by law,

may be taken. Heb. vi. 16. To say "as true as you live," or "as true as the gospel;" or to strengthen the assertion by any addition, is criminal; for it seems to be an admission that our word is not sufficient.

39. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

Any one who will do such an act is a wicked, ungodly person, and is in great need of salvation. And we ought to care for his soul, and to feel deeply for him. Our injury or dishonor is too small and trifling an affair to engross our thoughts or our attention when the jeopardy of his eternal interests is so alarming. If we will let our light shine, we must show him that we feel for him, and that we earnestly seek his salvation. This will show our consistency and benevolence, and will convince him of sin, and heap coals of fire on his head.

By turning to him the other cheek we show him Christian meekness when he was expecting to see anger, revenge and ill-will; and there is hope that this will melt his heart, by showing to him there is something noble and heavenly in religion. The Lord of glory himself did so; he never resisted evil; when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. 1 Pet. ii. 23. Thus following our Lord's example we show that we are the children of God. 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. 1 Pet. ii. 19-21.

There is so great a difference between the children of God and the children of the wicked one that when the difference is exhibited their characters must be distinguished. A city set on a hill can not be hid. False religion can not shine like the true.

44. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you.

This precept shows clearly that our religion is from heaven; for no mere man would have inserted this precept in his system. It is so contrary to all the feelings of the natural or carnal man, that he could not have thought of it. But the true Christian will endeavor to do it.

45. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.

It is not a trifling or unimportant qualification that prepares a vile sinner for bliss.

48. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Every sin that we commit renders us deserving of endless destruction. Then we ought to be perfect. Sin never can be innocent. If we can not sanctify ourselves, yet it is important for us to know the worst of ourselves that we may plead, and strive for mercy. Every sinner is bound to be as holy as Gabriel. Every sin deserves eternal destruction.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 1. Take heed that ye do not your alms before men.

We must be content with doing good and not fishing for praise. Else we have no reward from our heavenly Father.

9. After this manner therefore pray ye.

This is a sample of suitable, or judicious prayer; but was not intended as a form to be used, but a model to pattern after.

This form never seems to have been used by the disciples on any occasion. It belongs to the Jewish dispensation; and is not suitable for the gospel dispensation; having been made in the Jewish dispensation it would have to expire with it. It is a peculiarity of the gospel dispensation that we address our prayers to the throne in the name of the Mediator. We can see then that it was not intended to be used as a form, because the Mediator's name is not in it.

Another fact that shows that it was not intended to be continued into this dispensation, is that it contained a petition that the gospel dispensation may commence. And now when it has commenced, it is out of time to pray for it.

When John began to preach he informed his countrymen, that the gospel dispensation was at hand; was near at hand. And the Lord directs them to put up a petition that it may be ushered in. To use this form under the gospel dispensation is to rebel against his authority; for before he left the world he commanded his disciples to pray in his name.

24. No man can serve two masters.

Many it is to be feared will lose their souls in trying to carry heaven in their hands, and the world in their hearts: while it is written, If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.

33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

To strive to enter in at the strait gate is of too great importance to be put off for any other business whatever. The one thing that is needful above all others should be attended to first, and when that is secured—when we have given ourselves away to God—have become reconciled to him—are provided with a home in heaven, then we may bless God and rejoice.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 1. Judge not, that ye be not judged.

The depravity of fallen man makes him uncharitable; so that he is inclined to think evil of others, and to do them injustice. When a man is compelled to think evil of a man from his bad conduct, he is justifiable for thinking evil of that man; but let him make the greater efforts to reclaim him; and not turn his back upon him, but warn and persuade him to turn to God, that he may live.

7. Ask, and it shall be given you.

The means of getting are to ask. He who wishes a favor must ask for it. He that wants the mercy of grace and salvation must ask God for it. If he do not ask it, it must seem that he does not want it; and of course he can not expect to receive. Many who seek do find. And yet there are some alarming considerations that may alarm the careless sinner, lest he shall never see heaven.

To avoid perverting revelation, exposition of this passage is necessary. It is a promise to believers, and relates only to them as far as the 11th verse. Every one that asketh, etc., refers only to the regenerate. Else the following would be untrue: Gen. iv. 4, 5. Ps. iv. 3, 4, 5; cxix. 1-6. Prov. xv. 8; xxi. 27; Eccl. viii. 17; Matt. x. 37; Luke xiv. 27; xiii. 24. John xvii. 2, 3; ix. 20; vi. 65; xv. 5; i. 12, 13. Jer. xviii. 7-10. Isa xxvii. 11; lvii. 15. James iv. 3, 10. 2 Cor. ii. 14. Rom. viii. 7, 8; ix. 14, 16, 18. Ps. lxxviii. 36; cix. 7.

As securing our soul's salvation is the one thing needful, it should be attended to in the first place.

13. Enter ye in at the strait gate.

If the gate be strait, that is difficult, we do not know all the

dangers and difficulties attending it; and it becomes us to be up, and doing with our might what our hand findeth to do in the great business of our everlasting salvation.

15. Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

There is so much danger in the sinner's way, that he has cause to be alarmed. Satan is propagating false doctrine to deceive, ensnare, and destroy souls. They are not aware of the snare that he has laid for them; they receive his doctrine, and become involved in damnable heresy, and are lost.

16. Ye shall know them by their fruits.

While it is easy for Christians to know false teachers by their fruits, it is not easy for sinners to know them. Sinners often love and choose false teachers for their false doctrine. And they assent and go with them, because they love their errors. The Lord told his disciples that they, his disciples, should know false teachers by their fruits. But this was not that unconverted sinners should know them; for they are too often led captive by Satan at his will.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 2. And behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

How sweetly does this distressed man leave the case with Jesus. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, and healed him.

Let the poor sinner thus go to Jesus, this hour, nay this minute, saying, Lord, if thou wilt.

14. And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

From this it appears that Peter was a married man. The celibacy of the clergy was never named at that day.

32. And he said unto them, Go.

The Lord Jehovah is the great and only potentate. He has reserved the sinning angels, and not destroyed them, because

he had use for them. That use he is making of them every day. And his ways and thoughts are above ours as the haavens are high above the earth. We can not attain to the knowledge and comprehension of them.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 24. He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.

Although she was dead; yet as she was to be raised to life again, her condition was more like a person asleep than like one dead; for he was going to wake her out of her sleep. He used similar language about Lazarus while he lay in the grave, because he was going to raise him out of it. Neither the maid nor Lazarus was finally dead: they both had their death to endure yet. As they had not done with the world, but had their days to finish yet, they were not finally dead.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 34. Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Afflictions are a necessary discipline for the children of God upon earth. They could not grow and ripen in grace without them.

39. He that findeth his life shall lose it.

He that shuns the cross to secure the enjoyments of life will miss his object, and does not make the best use of means, nor the right use.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 2. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples.

John under severe afflictions, it seems, became desponding and low spirited, and had not these lively views of even divine

things which he enjoyed when he was prosecuting his ministry. Besides the spirit of prophecy may not have been continued when it was no longer needed, and John's mind seems to have become clouded about the Messiahship of Jesus.

11. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.

The superiority of John's prophetic office was the nearness of his standing to Christ's person. But one in the gospel dispensation would stand higher in evangelical attainments; and have more intimate acquaintance with evangelical religion.

13. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

From the days of John the gospel dispensation became conspicuous. Although it was not established, yet it appeared prominent in all the works and teachings of Christ. One peculiarity of it was that the Gentiles were to be equal with the Jews in gospel privileges, which in scripture figurative language is a kind of violence. See comment on Matt. xv. 23.

13. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

The prophets and the law were all the light which they had until John came to introduce Christ to Israel. The law came by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John i. 17.

28. Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

The poor sinner, knowing his lost and helpless condition, will come to Christ; for he is come for salvation; and to give beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Taking Christ's yoke upon us is the beginning of heaven to our souls. It is the entering of a new world of life and peace and bliss.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 8. For the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.

As the Sabbath was instituted at Creation to commemorate the great work of Creation, the Son of man should change it to the first day of the week to commemorate the greater work of Redemption. For he said, "All power in heaven and in earth is given to me." Matt. xxviii. 18. He has power to set up his kingdom and to establish it. He is God. We perceive and know that the Sabbath is changed from the seventh day of the week to the first. As this change was not made by accident we can understand that it has come by a divine appointment, although this verse under consideration is all the intimation that is given us on the subject. And this is enough with the fact of the change.

40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

This prophecy is a revelation of Christ's death, which all may understand. It clearly proves his divine mission.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 11. He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

It was given to the disciples to know the things of salvation, but to the multitude of common people it was not given to know them. It is clear that the multitude do not have knowledge of divine things. They are blinded and deceived and the truth they will not receive, because they do not love it. It is plainly revealed, but they will not receive it. Their carnal minds are enmity against it. They will not receive it. If they were meek and humble they would receive it, for it is plainly revealed. They adopt principles that keep them in ignorance, and prevent them from knowing the truth.

Some believe that God is bound to give all men to know the truth. This dogma is so dishonorable to God, is so untrue,

that it brings judgment upon them and shuts them up in darkness. Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent; and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matt. xi. 25. How easily might every one understand this subject if he had a heart to it Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

If a sinner believes that God is bound to give all to know, they will take no care to study, learn and receive the light, for they will think that they are safe and will take no pains to find out what is true. Thus while there is a way that seemeth right to a man the end thereof are the ways of death.

14, 19. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which receiveth seed by the wayside.

It is here plainly stated that he understandeth it not. He remains as ignorant of it as if he had not heard it.

20. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it.

His religion is not enduring; it is soon lost; and he is worse off than he was at first, more hardened and more wicked, for he had a kind of religion that was nothing but a mere excitement, having no change of heart, no regeneration. He was excited, and anon with joy received it. But joy is not always religion, not true piety. And having thus trifled, he becomes hardened.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSES 1, 2. At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

The conscience of Herod was not easy about the murder of John.

But it is clear that the Jews believed in the doctrine of the resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in it, but the Pharisees did believe it.

9. And the king was sorry.

Rash promises like this and the rash vow of Jephthah should never be made, for no good can come of them. Judges xi. 30.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSES 8, 9. This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

The law given from God is complete, finished, perfect. We may not add to it nor diminish from it. Neither will any worship be acceptable to him that is offered without the heart. We must worship with all our heart and with all our soul, delighting in him, being pleased with all he is, and with all he does. Ps. lxxviii. 36.

13. But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

There is much religion of man's making and on which men are depending to take them to heaven, but which will not be owned of God; when it is weighed in the balances it will be found wanting. Rites, doings and ceremonies will deceive those who depend upon them. There must be regeneration. The whole soul must be regenerated. It requires a new creature, a new creation to fit a vile sinner for that holy place to which saints are to be taken. No unclean thing can enter that glorious abode.

14. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

There is a command, "Be not deceived," and "Let no man deceive you." Obadiah 3. Matt. xxiv. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

There is less allowance made for persons being deceived than carnal men would expect. Eve was deceived into transgression. But her deception was no excuse. She had been

plainly commanded not to eat of the tree. To eat of it was an open violation of that command. There could be no excuse. She could not have been ignorant of her duty. Be not deceived; God is not mocked.

We also are more responsible for our errors than we may imagine. We have no right to let men mislead, deceive and destroy us. If we do then they and we will both fall. The gospel speaks of damnable heresy. And no doubt thousands are unconsciously sliding into destruction upon it. Matt. vii. 22.

We who have the scriptures are bound to know the truth. There is no excuse for error and mistake. Millions are in error and do not know the truth. The great reason is they do not try to know it. They do not inquire of those who can instruct them. If they had the meekness of little children they would ask, inquire and receive the truth. Mark x. 15. Every honest sincere man will diligently search for the truth. And when he finds it he will receive it. He will not go away without it; it is too precious to be trifled with. But the dishonest will go away without it because it does not agree with their dogmas. They scorn it and perish without it. The light shineth in the darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not, and they perish in the midst of light.

23. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

They felt sorry for her; she was so meek and so deeply afflicted. And they wished the Lord to perform her request, because his answer proves it. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." As the church with its dispensations was an inheritance of Israel, the Gentiles were aliens; and it was unnatural to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs to whom it did not belong. This was wisely said by the Lord, for it gave her an opportunity of showing her meekness and her perseverance, so that the Lord said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." How great was her joy on being accepted, and so completely delivered. She was not of Israel, but an unworthy Gentile. This was an instance of the violent taking the kingdom by force, mentioned in Matt. xi. 12. It was a kind of violence for unworthy Gentiles to take the Jews' privileges.

34. And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

He did not inquire because he did not know, because he did

know. But he wanted the amount to be stated in the narrative, for without it the miracle would not appear.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 6. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

When it is written, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth," John xvii. 17, we may clearly perceive what an important place the true doctrine holds in our salvation. If we are sanctified through the truth, then we can not be saved without it; for we are not saved without sanctification; and we can not be sanctified but by the truth. Therefore we must receive the truth or be lost. Christ only saves those who believe the truth, for it is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

The importance of believing and knowing the truth is not appreciated. Men will believe what pleases them, not what is truth. This is open rebellion against God. We have one Bible and only one gospel. How comes it then that we have a hundred sects, and a hundred different doctrines? The gospel contains only one system of salvation. We can not make fifty or a hundred sects out of one revealed system of salvation without adding and subtracting from that revealed system. And we are expressly prohibited from adding or diminishing. What then will become of our souls? If we add or diminish God will take away our part out of the Lamb's book of life. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. In this manner corrupt men are destroying their souls. As we have only one gospel we should only have one communion, one single denomination, for so we are commanded. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. i. 10. Do we do this? or do we despise the commandment of God? How can we hope for the salvation of the gospel when we are trampling the gospel under unhallowed feet? And when we see and know that we are pleasing ourselves, when we ought rather to be pleasing God?

We ought to lay our hand mightily to this work, and give not over until by the divine blessing we accomplish it. Nothing should be allowed to hinder us. See Matt. xx. 25, 26.

13. When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

This was an important inquiry, and of fundamental importance. There could be no salvation for them without their being fully and firmly settled upon it. It is very material what men believe about it. The gospel will be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, as they settle and determine this question.

18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.

The scriptures indulge in figurative language and in parables, which afford many opportunities to fanatics to wrest the scriptures to their own destruction, when they have a propensity that way, and are heaven-daring enough to indulge their propensity. In the figurative language of the scriptures, the church is represented as being built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. Eph. ii. 20. All the apostles and prophets are foundations in the building, for Christ erects the building upon them. And if he erects the building upon them it does not make them equal with him. He is the builder. They are only instruments in his hand. If all the apostles and prophets are foundations in the building it would be strange if Peter were not one of them.

But Peter was favored with being the instrument of bringing in the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and with being the instrument of bringing in the Gentiles of the family of Cornelius, at Cesarea. To these two scenes the Lord had reference when he called Peter a rock on which he would build his church. They were all foundation rocks in the building, all having that privilege.

Peter seems to have had the privilege of holding the keys on those two occasions mentioned above, in which he unlocked the door, first to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and then to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. Except in these instances Peter was not privileged above the rest. He held no higher office than his brethren. On every other occasion he stood as they did on a level platform with them. He does not seem to have stood as high as Paul, for Paul reproved him for dissembling and not eating with the Gentiles. Gal. ii. 11. In some instances he was a firm rock; but in this instance he was not as firm a rock as Paul was. And in fact there was not one of the apostles that showed as much weakness as Peter did in this instance in which Paul blamed him.

Neither did Peter show his modesty and firmness when the Lord said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Here poor Peter again stood the lowest of the twelve. And in these two instances he ad to take the lowest grade of the twelve: See xx. 25.

28. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Some of his hearers would see the commencement of the gospel dispensation on the day of Pentecost.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSES 1, 2. And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

How full was the evidence which God would give to his disciples to confirm to them the truth of Christ's divine mission. They seem to have had much more than was needed. John was the brother of James, the son of Zebedee.

Moses and Elias were Moses and Elijah the old prophets.

11. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

The promise was fulfilled that Elias should first come, for that was John the Baptist who was to come in the spirit and power of the prophet Elijah, and accomplish the work of introducing Christ to Israel. This was already fully accomplished.

21. Howbeit this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting.

Extraordinary means must be used on extraordinary occasions. Fasting with prayer is such means. When a person abstains from food and drink for a whole day, it shows that he is in earnest, and can deny himself and take up his cross,

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 3. And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

So unworthily, so vile and unclean is the sinner that a thorough change in him is necessary to humble him, to purify him, and fit him for heaven,

14. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

He commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Which shows his will in some sense that all should be saved. Again it is written, "That God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 4. The same is again expressed in the revelation "That God hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. And there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Luke xv. 7.

The plan of rekemption is in infinite benevolence; and is good and merciful and gracious in all its parts. By his prophets he entreated men to be reconciled to God, and be saved. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28 : x. 37, 38. If the poor sinner love any other object more than God he can not be saved. So also if he do not take up his cross to follow Christ, he can not be saved. The divine benevolence is beautifully displayed when the Lord wept over Jerusalem because they would not be saved. God would have them to be saved, but they would not.

15. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

This should be done in love and in tenderness. And if he have any disposition of a Christian, he will see your kindness, and will give you satisfaction; and reconcile the difficulty between you.

17. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.

To tell it to the church was to tell it to the elders of the

church who represented the church for government. Exod. xix. 3, 7. When Moses was commanded to say to the house of Jacob, and to tell the children of Israel, he came and called for the elders of the people and laid before their faces all these words. Moses understood that when he had delivered the message to the elders he had delivered it to the house of Jacob, and had told it to the people of Israel.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 4. And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female.

The law of nature is written in this fact. If God had meant to allow bigamy or polygamy, He would have made more than one woman for Adam. That he made only one proves he law of nature on this subject.

13, 14. Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

As they are circumcised they are members of My church. And why should they be hindered from coming to Me. As they were affected with depravity, as all men in the body are, they were not like the saints in glory; for no unclean thing can enter there. The church here is often called the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. It is an error to suppose it means the kingdom of glory.

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.

The Lord of glory deserved to be called good; for he was perfect in goodness. But the man who called him good deserved reproof, if he called the Lord good out of a mere compliment.

28. And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ye which have followed men in the regeneration cuts off Judas who never was born again. The apostles occupied eminent places in the church, here called thrones. But it is remarkable that they were all equal, all of one grade. No one was higher than another. All were bishops or elders, or presbyters. None were archbishops or primates. And this eminence was only during their natural lives. Their office did not descend to any successors. When Judas fell he had never been fully invested with his office. He was yet in his novitiate, only in his candidacy, and another was to take his bishopric. But when Herod killed James with the sword, as James' apostolic office had matured in him, ripened into complete maturity, it ended with his life; and we read of no successor being appointed to James. And when the apostles were successively called away, no successors were appointed. Acts xii. 2. This silence is very significant, very full and expressive. And it shows us that the twelve apostles had no successors.

If the apostles had had successors, the thrones would have been multiplied, for there would have been a throne for each one.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSES 25, 26. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever shall be great among you, let him be your minister.

No official distinction was allowed, above the simple and humble office of a minister. The apostles themselves acknowledged that they only ranked as elders and presbyters, and that bishop meant no more. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 1.

The minister of the gospel had peculiar talents for various branches of ministerial employment, but they were all of one grade. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." 1 Tim. v. 21. 2 John 1. Acts xiv. 23; xv. 4, 6, 23; xvi. 4.

When some dissension arose in the church about circumcision, and they wanted an authoritative decision upon it, it was determined that Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jeru-

salem unto the apostles and elders about this question. They had no other higher authority to submit it to besides the apostles and elders. The elders were equal officially with the apostles. Where was the pope then? He was unknown. Where was the diocesan? Where were the archbishop and primate? The silence of the scriptures at this point about a pope and a primate is equal to a flood of light on this point. This passage, "It shall not be so among you," settles the question about popes and diocesans forever. Paul exercised his ministry chiefly among the Gentiles, but Peter and other apostles principally among the Jews. Gal. ii. 9. No one thought of claiming any higher authority than another. Ministerial parity was acknowledged by all, and what was laws and right then is so now.

If the apostles and primitive church did not know of a pope nor a diocesan, then there was none; Christ had not appointed any such dignitary. And this is enough for us.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 12. And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

The house appointed and consecrated to the worship of God is too sacred a place for money matters and secular business. No money matters should be transacted or spoken of in the house appropriated to divine worship. To think of such things on the Lord's day is a profanation of the Sabbath, much more to propose the business, pay the money, receive and count it and make a minute of the transaction in the treasurer's accounts.

23. And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority.

Referring them to John for His authority to act as high priest in the temple was entirely satisfactory, for there was no greater prophet than John. If John were as high a prophet as Moses, then John's baptizing or washing Him with water

as he was going to commence his public ministry would be as valid an induction into the office of the high priesthood as was Moses washing Aaron. Exod. xxix. 4. As Aaron could not administer the high priest's office until Moses had washed him with water at the door of the tabernacle, so neither could Christ. His baptism being delayed until he was thirty years of age showed clearly that his baptism was for that purpose. If his baptism had been a moral personal duty it would not have been right to delay it till that time, but as it is a ceremonial rite and a part of his induction into the high priesthood, it was right and proper to delay it till then.

If any one supposes that the Lord was referring the Jews to an irrelevant subject, they are much mistaken. He was talking to the point as he always did.

43. Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The membership of the Jewish Church was held by the Jewish people during that dispensation. But as the gospel dispensation was about to commence on the day of Pentecost, all nations would have equal privilege of access to it. They were persecuting Christ and his children in introducing it, and thereby they were forfeiting the peculiar privileges which they had so long held in it.

Many of Israel had been rejected in the days of Moses for their unfaithfulness and were cast off. King Saul was rejected from the throne and David was anointed in his stead. And now the Jews were to have the kingdom of God taken from them because they had forfeited their inheritance. But there was not a single believer disinherited. They had degenerated until they had become dry branches—mere hypocrites. The truly pious had all received Christ and had become his disciples. The church of God, both visible and invisible, were to be removed from that people as such, and to be translated in a new dispensation, to believers in Christ of both Jews and Gentiles, to such as worshiped in spirit and in truth, and who were to be gathered out of all nations. Rev. v. 9.

Very important information is to be gathered from this passage First, that the Jews, notwithstanding their degeneracy, were yet the visible kingdom of God which was not taken away from them. Second, that whatever kingdom of God we have is the same that was taken from the Jews. Third, no new church was erected, but the same church, the same kingdom of God was brought away from those unbelievers and given to believers

of both Jews and Gentiles. Fourth, the Baptist denomination, according to their dogmas, are undermined. They have lost their foundation and profess to be a new church, a new structure and not the Jewish Church transplanted; for if it were the kingdom of God that was built upon the Abrahamic covenant and which was perpetuated by the Divine Spirit among the Jews until the Lord was crucified, then the Abrahamic covenant on which it was built must come with it. From this consequence there is no escape.

The apostle had the same view of the subject when he said, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and his according to the promise." Gal. iii. 29.

The promise to Abraham was, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7. This is conclusive when it is remembered that this covenant was 430 years before the Mosaic dispensation, and yet it was not affected by that dispensation. And as it was not affected by the opening of that dispensation, so neither can it be affected by the opening of the gospel dispensation, as the apostle shows in the above passage from Galatians. So also in the next, or Gal. iii. 8, he shows further that changing the dispensation can not affect the covenant. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law that was 430 years after, can not disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. Gal. iii. 17.

This was proved to be a matter of fact, for the Jewish dispensation which was after the Abrahamic covenant, did not abrogate or disannul it. And it is likewise a matter of fact, that the gospel dispensation can no more abrogate or disannul it. This is demonstrated by the fact that, under the gospel dispensation, they who are Christ's are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Again, all this is further demonstrated by the inspired declaration, "Now we brethren as Isaac was are the children of the promise." Gal. iv. 28. Isaac was born under this covenant made with Abraham, and so were we born under it and are heirs to it when we become believers. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." Gal. iii. 7. How can this be so, if the Abrahamic covenant be not in force? This, too, is in accordance with the divine declaration, that it is an everlasting covenant to continue while God has a church on earth. Gen. xvii. 7.

Again, that the Abrahamic covenant remains as the foundation covenant to the church is clearly shown by the fact that

it comprehends both Jews and Gentiles, embracing all believers whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Rom. iv. 16.

Once more, God has not left his believing children in any darkness on this subject, but has given us line upon line and precept upon precept, that we may know the truth, if we can only believe his word. The kingdom of God, his church, is called the good olive-tree from which some of the branches, visible branches, were broken off for unbelief and because they did not bring forth fruit. And the Gentile believers were grafted into the same olive tree from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off and which now is supporting them. Rom. xi. 13-24. God has not had more than one church, one kingdom of God on earth. And this remains through all ages to the end of time. Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews, "Behold your house is left unto you desolate," Matt. xxiii. 38. All their ordinances of worship were forsaken of God.

CHAPTER XXII

VERSES 31, 32. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Formerly I could not understand how this proved the doctrine of the resurrection. But the doctrine of the resurrection has two parts to it, and it is established in both parts when one part is proved. The part here proved is the anastasis; the standing up again of the soul after the body has fallen. The soul is living and acting after the death of the body. And it waits in the other world until the body is raised to be reunited to it. Originally the word anastasis signified the standing up again of the soul when the body falls in death. And the word egeresis signified the rising again of the body at the end of the world. When the Lord said, "I am the God of Abraham," it taught Moses and Israel that Abraham was somebody—was a living person, or God could not be his God. And if Abraham were still living in the spirit world, then the Sadducees were wrong in believing that there was no such separate state—no angel—no spirit.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

It is believed that some early transcriber being familiar with the name of Zacharias son of Barachias, heedlessly inserted it instead of saying, Son of Jehoida. It need not be thought strange if some such mistakes have occurred. It is rather to be thought strange that there are so few of them; and the book kept so pure. There is undoubtedly a mistake of a pronoun in 1 Sam. i. 28, when the pronoun should have been she instead of he; for it was Hannah that worshiped the Lord there. See 1 Sam. iii. 7.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VERSE 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Besides the persecutions of those times, there were great judgments impending over the bloody city of Jerusalem. To both of which this verse refers. See verses 9, 21, 34. By which we are enabled to perceive that the coming of Christ here refers to his coming to destroy Jerusalem. v. 27.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VERSE 26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

As they were eating the passover, which shows that the feasts were to change. The passover was to give place to the eucharist. The Lord took bread, brake it—the bread, and

gave it—the bread to his disciples, and said, take, eat it the bread. There was nothing there but the bread, and the cup that held the wine. This is my body, means this is my body under a figure: this bread represents my body—is my body under a figure. There was no change of the substance of the bread into anything else. And least of all could the bread be changed into God, for God is immutable; it can not be changed into him, nor can he be changed into it.

In John vi. 50, 51, the Lord calls himself bread, and bread that came down from heaven. He is using the same figurative language. If his body were bread it would not need any change to make the bread become his body; for his body was already bread. But the scriptures have kindly protected us from this idolatry, 1 Cor. xi. 23-29, where the bread is called bread three times after the feast was eaten. This might seem to be sufficient, seeing that no change of the substance—no transubstantiation is mentioned. And the inspired apostle alluding to the eucharist, says, "The bread that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ," showing that it was bread and not flesh. Acts ii. 42, 46; xx. 7, 11, 27. Those who believe in popish dogmas must be exceedingly hardened and blinded, and preparing for a dreadful retribution. Brethren, pray for them.

74. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

It is no wonder that such a poor erring creature as Peter who did deny his Lord, and curse and swear to the perjury to make the falsehood believed, never set himself up to be better than the rest of his brethren, and pope, head and father over them. He would not be guilty of that falsehood. He had been guilty of enough without that. That shameful falsehood he wisely left for others to tell of him after he was gone. It is just worthy of them. There was to be a falling away, and the man of sin, the son of perdition, was to be revealed, which is fulfilled in popery.

Besides change of anything into divinity, is an absurdity and atheism, as really as to change divinity into anything else. For the latter is making something to be God that was not God until it was so changed. And no scientific man contends that divinity can create divinity; for it would be mutability: and that divinity would be new, something that was not.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VERSE 11. And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

That is, thou sayest it—thou sayest the thing that is true. It was common to express an affirmative thus.

18. For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

The governor knew that Jesus was innocent of any crime. He knew that Jesus was persecuted. And as an honest ruler he ought to have released him, and chid or punished them. And he appealed to them, verse 23, "Why, what evil hath he done?" But they did not speak of any evil that he had done: for they knew that he had not done any.

44. The thieves also which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

One of them did so only. It was common in the scriptures to impute a thing to the party that did it, although only some of them actually engaged in it.

45. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

From noon until three o'clock in the afternoon, darkness prevailed over the land, as if it had been night. God frowned in that darkness upon the wickedness shown to his beloved Son, and gave this evidence of his displeasure.

51. And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.

These were signal displays of the divine displeasure. No wonder if great fear fell upon them.

52, 53. And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection.

These seem to have come out of their graves to accompany the Lord in his triumphant ascension.

54. Now when the centurion, and they that were

with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

The evidence was conclusive. And this evidence is given us, and comes down in the history to us, so that it appears to us as well as to them. And we have cause to bow our consciences under the same conviction.

62, 63, 64. Now, the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day.

All their care and pains would only make the evidence of his resurrection the stronger; so that we partake of the satisfaction that it affords. We feel all the full assurance that they have thus furnished us. What are those poor souls' thoughts while in the other world these two thousand years about these things, when they have had to see them as they are and think of them as they are under the light of eternity? Oh the overwhelming light of eternity! They can not trifle with that as they trifled with light and truth while here.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VERSES 1, 2, 4. In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

The crucifixion of the Lord of glory, and the resurrection of his body, to complete the glorious provision of the gospel of sinners' salvation, and the heaven-daring wickedness of man in relation to it, were too important in the Lord's view to pass lightly over it. An angel shining in heavenly light, early in the morning appeared to the watchmen who guarded the sepulcher, rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulcher,

and sat upon it. How kind in God to give the watch this proof of the resurrection. How kind to give the other information to the disciples. He makes the sun to shine, and the rain to descend upon the wicked and the good.

13. Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

How they dare to resist and trifle thus with all this evidence, and utter so barefaced a falsehood, it is difficult to imagine. One would think they might be sobered into a little humility by all the convulsions of nature shown them in judgment.

M A R K .



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

This is not so much the beginning of the gospel, as the beginning of Mark's history of the gospel; for it is written, "The scriptures foreseeing God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed" Gal. iii. 8. Each of the four evangelists has given us a history of the gospel. So that the meaning of the gospel is, The beginning of those events which related to the introduction of the gospel. The gospel way of salvation is the only way that has been in operation ever since the fall, yet the ceremonies of religion were different under different dispensations. The peculiar ceremonies of the gospel dispensation did not commence until our Lord suffered on the cross. Col. ii. 14. Our Lord's ministry and John the Baptist's ministry were both under the Mosaic dispensation. Jesus offered himself upon the cross as the last sacrifice of that dispensation, and took it out of the way nailing it to his cross. The sacrifice of the mass is a popish superstition—a false pretense—a corrupt practice.

2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

That messenger was John the Baptist, who was sent before the face of Christ, to prepare the Jews to expect him, and to believe on him. Isa. xl. 3, 5. Mal. iii. 1.

5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

The meaning of all, is only many; for it is expressly stated, "That the Pharisees and lawyers did not so." Luke vii. 30.

In what manner water was applied in John's baptism is not stated. And it is not necessary for us to know; as it was not

a gospel ordinance, but under the Jewish dispensation, a ceremony to introduce Christ to Israel, and ended with John's ministry ; for John said, I must decrease.

8. I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

The expression, *with water*, proves that the mode was not by immersion ; for in this mode water is not the instrument used. If it had been by immersion, it would not have been said with water, but in water.

Besides in comparing John's baptism with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which was to be by pouring out and shedding down upon them, by pouring out of the Holy Spirit. Acts ii. 17, 18, 33, we again learn the same truth.

This is again shown in the fact, that John commenced his baptism in the wilderness, a distance from Jordan. "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea." Matt. iii. 1. "And went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized." John x. 40. Here we learn that John did not need a river for the ordinance of baptism ; for he baptized in the wilderness of Judea. But when people began to assemble to him in vast multitudes, and many from a distance, they would need water for their beasts, for drinking, and for cooking, and for other purposes than baptism. And then he would repair to the side of a river to supply the wants of the multitude. And being there, he would use the water of the river for baptism. "*In Jordan*" does not mean any more than at Jordan, near Jordan, or by the side of Jordan ; for so the soles of the priest's feet "stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan." Josh. iii. 17.

To baptize in a river is quite a different thing from baptizing in the water of a river, as being in a mountain is a different thing from being in the ground of a mountain ; and as sitting in the sea, from sitting in the water of the sea. Matt. v. 1 ; xvii. 1. John iv. 21. Being in a mountain means only being on the side of it, as in the sea means only on the waters of it. Mark iv. 1.

The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in the sea on dry ground, so that in the sea, or in a river means only within its banks : and not in its waters. But if it were not so, it would make nothing for the Baptists, because John knew nothing about gospel baptism, did not administer it ; for it was not instituted until the Lord rose from the dead. Matt. xxviii. 19. How preposterous are the Baptists' notions.

Besides, if there be any relations between the baptism of John, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, then as the latter

is by pouring out and shedding down, so must the former be.

10. And straightway coming up out of the water.

How many erroneous views about the mode of baptism may have been occasioned by the injudicious rendering of the Greek no man can say, but the rendering in this passage is erroneous. The passage here rendered, out of the water, is *apo udatos*, the obvious meaning of which is, *from the water*. Such carelessness is not innocent.

15. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

The saying the time is fulfilled, is that it is near. The time for the opening of the gospel dispensation is near. Repentance was indispensable to believing in Christ with a true and saving faith, as a sick man must feel his disease before he applies to a physician. They were exhorted to the future duties of repenting and believing.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 5. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

It deserves our attention, that the inspired writer said "When Jesus saw their faith," not the faith of the sick man. So also the ruler asked for his daughter, and was heard. Matt. ix. 18. Believers are accepted in their faith for others. If thoughts arose in the hearts of the multitude, at the Lord's saying, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, they could know the propriety of it; because Divine power would not have accompanied the word if it had not been right. Jesus would have the people to know that all power was given to him. And he would have them see and know that he did exercise it. The curing proved the doctrine.

24. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

As they did not go to that place for the purpose of getting food, but merely took what was in their reach, let the reader beware that he do not do more.

27. And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

The sabbath was set apart—consecrated for the worship and service of God, for man's benefit. If he keeps the sabbath-day holy, it will be to his advantage.

28. Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

As the Son of God is the Creator of the universe, he is the Lord of it. And he would show that sovereignty by changing it to the first day of the week; for from that time it has been kept on the first day of the week. The Lord met with the disciples on the first day of the week. There is no probability that the disciples knew of this change for some weeks, nor until Pentecost—until they were endued with power from on high. Luke xxiv. 49. John was in the spirit on the Lord's day. Rev. i. 10. The title, Lord's day, shows its sanctity; for if it be God's day then it is not ours. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." Exod. xx. 10. This proves its sanctity—holiness.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 28. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme.

It is an important duty for us to understand the scripture, and obtain the exact meaning of the word; for otherwise we can not profit by it, when it says, "That all sins shall be forgiven unto men," and when it says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." We must explain both these passages, or mistake their meaning, and make the word contradict itself. It is not meant that all sins shall be forgiven unto men; but that all kinds of sins, but one kind. And the soul that commits any sin must perish eternally, except it be atoned for and pardoned.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?

If they had called these persons his relatives, or his kindred, there would have been room to suppose that they might have been only his relatives or cousins. But when they are called brothers and sisters, along with his mother Mary, there is no room left but to suppose that James, Joses, Judas and Simon, were his natural brothers, as Mary was his mother, and the sisters mentioned were his sisters, the children of his mother. Thus it appears that Mary was blessed with seven other children besides Jesus. She was really favored of the Lord. The efforts of Papists to evade the truth is in character. There is not a hint given us of any incongruity in her having other children: it is all a fanatical superstition, and corresponds with other popish superstitions. The notion of perpetual virginity is contradicted in this passage if the brothers and sisters of the Lord were living there with the family.

And it is contradicted again when it is said, "And knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born son." Matt. i. 25. If Joseph knew her not—had not carnal knowledge of her, had not marital commerce with her until she had brought forth her first-born son, then he had such connection with her afterward. Else why is this said? If this had been omitted by the inspired writer, we would have been without this intimation that he had this intercourse afterward. We can here see clearly that the Holy Ghost did not intend to counteract the popish dogma of perpetual virginity.

Besides, as Mary was a holy or pious woman, she would be a faithful wife: and as she was married to Joseph, she could not defraud him of his marital rights. Piety would forbid it. The inspired apostle lays down the duty of husbands and wives in express terms, "Defraud ye not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to prayer and fasting; and come together again." If Mary was a pious woman she could not wrong her husband of his marriage rights. To make her over holy they make her wicked and superstitious.

Besides, we are forbidden to add to the scriptures, or to subtract from them. If they have inserted no such dogma as

the perpetual virginity of Mary, we can not do it without usurping authority to mend and correct the divine code.

This subject seems therefore to be as plain as it need be.

20. For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

He did many religious duties. Wicked men sometimes have much trouble with their consciences; though after long persisting in sin they often become hardened, cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God. It would seem to be easy for them to know what is right. We, in verse 26, see to what degree of wickedness he attained.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 7. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

It is vain to set up the commandments of men to serve God with; for it is written, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Matt. xv. 13.

8. For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men.

We can not serve two masters; we have to lay aside the commandments of God to take up and practice the traditions of men. They reject the commandments of God to keep their own traditions. They who make laws for the house of God set up authority in his place, set up equal authority with him; which is a bold and sacrilegious assumption.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

The translators could not render a passage unless they understood the meaning of it. Therefore they could not do justice to such passages as Gen. i. 1; iv. 1, 26; iii. 14, 15.

Exod. xxii. 12. 1 Kings ii. 9. Rom. ix. 3. Rev. xiii. 8, and some others as this. For the words added in this passage to make it more plain have a contrary effect, and seem to show that all power was not given to him in heaven and in earth, according to Matt. xxviii. 18. In the original the passage is in beautiful harmony with this in Matthew, and reads thus: "But to sit on my right hand or on my left is not mine to give, only to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." It was his to give to them. There was no need of putting the two sayings in any disagreement—create a needless discrepancy.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 23. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

In that age of miracles the inspired apostles had this necessary faith of miracles. When God would have such a miracle—any miracle performed, the Holy Ghost impressed it upon their mind so that they knew that it was the will of God; and then when they spake it was done. When it was not to be performed, then it was not so impressed upon their mind. No one of them commanded a mountain to be so removed, because it was not to be done. God did not put his prophets to the blush of failure. 1 Sam. iii. 19.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 16. And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's.

When they came to him with cavils, he was always above them, and confounded them; and showed a superior knowledge which could not have been other than divine. In this he showed clearly that he was the Messiah. They became so

sensible of his superiority, that they ceased to question him. Matt. xxii. 46.

26, 27. And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's souls had perished, become extinct as the Sadducees believed, God could not have remained still their God; for he could not remain the God of those who had no existence. If he had been yet their God when God thus spake to him, they must have been living souls; else he could not have remained their God still. I used to be at a loss to see how this proved the resurrection. But reflecting that as the doctrine of the resurrection had two parts, the anastasis, or standing up again of the soul a living active being in the other world when the body dies, and the egeresis or rising up again of the body at the end of the world, to prove one part of it, established the doctrine; for its parts were connected together as one doctrine. One of the scribes is spoken of as seeing the subject rightly, in the next verse, verse 28.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 27. And then shall he send his angels.

The angels of his providence to gather all the Israelites from all parts of the world to attend the feast at Jerusalem, that he might execute upon Jerusalem the judgments which they had incurred by rejecting and crucifying their Lord.

30. Verily I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Some of his hearers would live to see the Lord's coming to destroy Jerusalem by the Roman army under Titus Vespasian.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 9. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

This prophecy being fulfilled to the letter stands as an evidence of the truth of the divine word, and shows the truth of the gospel.

21. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

We learn here that this poor sinner is lost, and lost to all eternity. If after any period of suffering in purgatory, if there were such a place, or in any other place of misery, if he were delivered to bliss that would be glorious and endless, we can not see how it would have been good for him that he had never been born. The same description of his end is given us, when it said of his fall, "That he might go to his own place." Acts i. 28. "And none of them is lost; but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled." John xvii. 12.

The Son of man would lay down his life, die on the cross, give his life a ransom for many. Isa. liii. The Lord had infinite power to avoid these dreadful sufferings. But for this purpose came he into the world. Matt. xxvi. 39. John xii. 27, 28. The redemption and salvation of a lost world lay near his heart. He would not avoid the dreadful anguish that it would cost him. He was perfectly a free agent, and upon the whole chose to undergo the severe agony which he felt when he said, Now is my soul troubled; and when the large drops of sweat descended from the pores of his body to the ground. And when his unequalled agony changed and distorted his vi age more than any visage had ever before been distorted, his agony of soul made it seem as if his sweat came from the inner man. Isa. lii. 14. John x. 18.

His rising triumph will ascend still higher than his sorrow descended when he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied with the glory and bliss which shall follow, and beholding angels as they pay him honor in heaven's eternal raptures, while they will be singing, Glory to God in the highest.

25. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

How kindly and providently, and with prophetic spirit does our Lord guard his children from idolatry by telling us that the drink in the eucharist which he will drink with his brethren when he will spiritually commune with them, is not blood, but, is really the fruit of the vine, as declared. 1 Cor. x. 16. Blindness can only be perverse and culpable. 'Tis the fruit of the vine!

29. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

Peter was the only disciple who made such a vow of fidelity to his Lord. His confidence in his own strength was misplaced, and therefore he egregiously failed in the performance of it. After he had made the vow he should faithfully have kept it whatever it cost him. He showed himself to be in that instant treacherous and untrustworthy.

50. And they all forsook him and fled.

They were in great terror lest they too should be apprehended with the Lord. They were, with Peter, weak and unreliable. Peter's vow of fidelity made his crime the greater.

67, 68. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.

Lying is considered a very dishonorable vice. And although it does not appear that he was addicted to it, yet it must be criminal in any instance, and especially when he had been warned on the subject.

71. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

When he had incurred the shameful crimes of falsehood and profane swearing, it was becoming that he should weep when he thought thereon. How obvious is it, that man is a poor creature, that God is wonderful in his long suffering, and rich in his grace. He still loved Peter, and loved him with an everlasting love. And how obvious is it that the ministry is committed to earthen vessels. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSES 29, 30. And they that passed by, railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross.

If they had known what infinite and sufficient reasons he had for providing salvation for men, how much he loved his work, and how much he loved the Father, and how much interest he took in glorifying God in man's redemption, they would not have derided him thus : for it is written, "Had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. ii. 8.

But they were unwilling to understand the things that were plainly showed them.

Every thing seems to depend on the state of the sinner's heart. For while some were thus treating with scorn the Lord of glory, there were others of an opposite character. Even Pilate and Herod, wicked men, had convictions of truth about the innocence of John the Baptist and Jesus. Matt. xxvii. 18. Mark vi. 20. And when the centurion who had charge of the transactions at the crucifixion, saw the demonstrations that showed the divine displeasure, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." And five hundred men of the vicinity knew what was the nature and true character of these things. 1 Cor. xv. 6.

LUKE.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

The idolatry and man-worship that wicked men try to learn from this scripture has no support from it. Blessing is very common in the scriptures. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: even frail Peter is pronounced blessed. Although he cursed and swore and denied his Master, falsifying the truth and per-juring himself in that denial, yet he could be blessed, and greatly blessed with forgiveness, and with acceptance to the apostolic office. Even Ishmael is by God pronounced blessed. But he never was worshipped on that account. Again a still higher blessing is pronounced, Judges v. 24, upon Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, though she was not of the children of Israel. Mary is blessed among women, but Jael the Gentile is blessed above women. To canonize Jael or Mary for such blessing, is to let us know, by their fruits, what corrupt men Papists are.

35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

The miraculous conception was one reason for calling him the Son of God, for he was thus begotten of God as to his human body, having God for his father and making God his father, Luke iii. 38, and entitling him to be called the Son of God. And a second reason was that the Second Person in the Godhead was joined to the manhood, making one person of the two natures thus united into one person. By this the man Jesus was known, and is known to be the Son of God. That the Savior had these two natures, divine and human, is shown, Rom. ix. 5. And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all God blessed forever. Amen.

64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

The mouth of Zacharias; for he had been speechless since the vision for nearly a year.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 35. Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Although the explanation is not given, yet as she stood by the cross and saw the protracted suffering and dying agonies of her holy and greatly beloved Son, we see how this prophecy was amply fulfilled.

52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

As Jesus had a human body and a human soul to constitute his complete manhood, he could grow in size, and could increase in wisdom as his soul was receiving development and acquiring knowledge, for the divine nature would only impart knowledge to the human soul as it could bear it.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Under the Mosaic dispensation its privileges were restricted to Israelites. Even the ministry of John the Baptist, and the ministry of the Lord belonged to that dispensation. These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." Matt. x. 5, 6. Rom. xv. 8. Now, I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. Matt. xv. 24. Luke i. 59, 76, 77. Mal. iv. 5.

Until the gospel dispensation was opened on the day of Pentecost, the Mosaic dispensation must have continued. Col. ii. 14. If the Lord's ministry was under the Mosaic dispensation, then was John the Baptist's also, as was all ecclesiasti-

cal affairs: for Christ attended upon the passover, and upon all the legal rites. "Then came the day of unleavened bread when the passover must be killed." Luke xxii. 7. It must be killed. The law was yet in force with full authority. But the opening of the gospel dispensation was to open it to all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, *i. e.*, to all nations, or to all flesh.

But we see that all has to be restricted to the subject of salvation, for salvation was to be for men, and not for beasts. All flesh can not be applied further than to nations and men.

We learn, therefore, that we are not always to give words their common meaning, but what the subject admits, and what parallel passages allow. As, God is a rock. Psalm xxxi. 3. The Lord is a man of war. Exod. xv. 3. 2 Sam. xxii. 2. Peter is called rock. Matt. xvi. 18. The Lord Jesus is called the bread that came down from heaven; and bread is called his body. John vi. 51. Matt. xxvi. 26. The divine messengers who visited Abraham are called men and they are called God. Gen. xviii. 1, 2. Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still. Although there are a hundred such passages, no man, except Papists and Arminians, misunderstands one of them. And their misunderstanding is in the face of the clearest light.

This will not give any liberty to licentiousness in the interpretation of scripture, for many things like the Trinity, Melchisedek, divine attributes, are above our comprehension, as the heavens are above the earth. Many things must be taken just as we read them, with meekness and fear; and many are to be interpreted differently, as they were evidently intended to be, and with the same meekness and fear. John vi. 50, 53. John iv. 14; xi. 11, 26. All the parables, metaphors and paradoxes, as 2 Cor. xi. 8, 23; Gen. xxxi. 24; Acts xxvii. 34, can not we interpret the last two as we do parables, to mean differently from what is expressed, and to be very significant and expressive? The highest reverence for the divine word is shown by taking it in the meaning intended by the author, and faithfully and diligently putting it in practice.

23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph.

It was necessary that priests be thirty years of age before they were allowed to take the sacred offices, whether the high priesthood or the inferior offices. Num. iv. 3, 23, 30. It was not from any neglect or indifference that the Lord delayed his official work to this late period; it was a part of the righteousness of the law, as he told John. Matt. iii. 15; v. 17, 18. He

could not take the office of high priest unless he received a washing of water, or some application of water equivalent to. Lev. viii. 4, 5, 6. The baptism of Christ had no reference to the sacrament of water baptism, which was not instituted until three years afterward. The supper was instituted on the evening before he was crucified, on the observance of the passover and the other sacrament after his resurrection. Matt. xxvi. 26; xxviii. 19.

It is a remarkable fact that things are often spoken of in the word under the aspect of what they appear to be, and by the divine writers, and not by ignorant men. This may, therefore, be adopted as a rule of interpretation agreeably to Rom. iv. 17. This is, so far, an exception to the rule that it is stated (being as was supposed the Son of Joseph). It was wise and good for Joshua to command the sun and moon to stand still, for if he had said, earth and moon stand still, it would have confused and perplexed the minds of the people, and lessened the impression of the miracle. Infinite wisdom and goodness are always exercised in all things. Gen. xviii. 2, 13, 20; xix. 1, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24.

Thus the genealogy too is calculated for Joseph, because he was seemingly to men the father of Christ, both in Matthew and Luke, in two lines of David's posterity.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 2. Being forty days tempted of the devil.

If Satan knew who Jesus was it would be strange that he should have thought it possible that he could succeed in such an enterprise. It was a great undertaking—a bold undertaking. God had infinite reasons for displaying his long suffering in thus indulging Satan. And he triumphed here as he did when he suffered the same malignant fiend to tempt Job. Goodness and grace and truth will always thus triumph when God will put such wickedness to the blush in so signal a manner. Adam and Eve fell—and many have fallen as David and Solomon in individual cases; this is, partially falling. All have not endured temptations as Abraham, Job, and many others have. Rev. iii. 10. 1 Cor. x. 13. It is our duty to strive and watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation. Jas. i. 12. 1 Tim. vi. 9. Matt. xxvi. 41. John xv. 5.

25, 26. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut

up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land.

But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. Sidon was the same as Zidon, Sidon being the Greek form of the Phœnician name Zidon. This is inserted to show that she did not belong to the people of Israel. We are assisted by these two passages, this and the following, respecting Naaman the Syrian, who also was a heathen, and not an Israelite, in understanding. John xvii. 12, on the point whether Judas the apostate was one of these given to Christ. None of them is lost, but the son of perdition. This parallel passage in John is shown to prove that Judas Iscariot was not one of those given to Christ. And when it reads, "And none of them is lost but the son of perdition," the meaning requires these words to be added, "is lost;" making it read, "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition is lost," showing that he was not one of them given to Christ. For when the people of Israel are spoken of as to widows and lepers, and none of them was favored as the widow and leper were, they are not exceptions to the Israelites but additions, *i. e.*, to none of them was the prophet sent; but he was sent to Sarepta, to a woman that was a widow; and none of the lepers of Israel were healed, but Naaman the Syrian was healed.

Besides, the discovery of this truth saves the passage of John from the imputation of discrepancy, for it expressly states, verse 12, "While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name, and none of them is lost." If Judas were one of them, and was lost, then it could not be said, "I kept them in thy name." So beautifully do the scriptures sustain themselves and the truth. But this is not all the beauty of the garments of truth worn by the sacred word. For it is written, The righteous shall hold on his way. They shall not come into condemnation, who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. Job xvii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 5.

28. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath.

How differently men do hear. The old prophets had adherents and persecutors, so that Stephen could appeal to the Jews, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted and slain?" Acts vii. 52. But no man should suffer his heart to rise in anger and wrath against God and his cause: rather should we treat his servants with love and civility; because what we do to them, we do to him. Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

If a man has any love for himself he should treat divine things with civility, for he has a deep interest in them.

There was nothing to be offended at in the Lord's remarks about the prophet Elijah being sent, not to an Israelitish widow, but to a Gentile; nor in Elisha's being sent to Naaman and not to an Israelite. They were two facts of history—two events in the holy providence of an all-wise Jehovah. There was nothing in these facts that ought to have offended them with him, for God makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good. If they were angry they could only be angry at truth, and at its author.

He knew beforehand how they would receive it. And he said it to instruct them and us in the sovereignty of grace. We need this instruction, and they show how much they needed it.

If we can know men by their fruits, we know that they were ungodly men—heaven-daring sinners, filling up the measure of their iniquities, and would have a fearful account to render at the great day.

The same enmity to truth and to God was always manifested by that wicked people. When the Lord taught divine sovereignty, and their dependence on his grace, saying, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." John vi. 65, 66.

How differently did different men act on hearing the truth. It was necessary that truth be preached, that men may show the state of their hearts. No one can believe that God would be so hated for the sovereignty of grace, if it were not acted out by the wicked. Thus by their fruits we may know them. How many profess to be Christians while they are proving their impenitence and unbelief!

34. Saying, let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

Devils confessed him; but wicked men were stubborn in their unbelief, more stubborn than devils.

We have instances of wicked men yielding the point. Exod. ix. 27; viii. 19. 2 Sam. xix. 19. Matt. xxvii. 3, 17, 18, 19, 23; xxviii. 11. Acts iv. 16.

Wicked men are called unbelievers. But it is said, devils believe and tremble, Jas. ii. 19; showing unbelievers in this point to be worse than devils. John ix. 22; iv. 42. O! let them hasten to repent. Acts xvii. 30.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

If he needed to pray, who was the Lord from heaven, it seems still more needful for us. But it seems not needful to adduce arguments for prayer; prayer is the breathing of a living soul of a living Christian. But not so the hypocrite. Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God? Job xxvii. 10. It is a Christian's nature to pray.

33. And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

Eat and drink must be taken in a sense that the subject suggests, *i. e.*, ate and drank steadily without that occasional interruption that fasting requires; for on a day of fasting nothing is taken into the mouth as food or drink—no matter how great the hunger or thirst may be. If a person have a fever, or be very weak, or be sick, fasting might be improper. To fast for three days and three nights seems a great while to abstain. But Elijah and Christ fasted forty days. But they were miraculously sustained. 1 Kings xix. 8. Matt. iv. 2. For ordinary fasting without supernatural aid, see Esther iv. 16. Dan. vi. 18. Jonah iii. 5-7. Luke v. 35.

If loving enemies, taking up our cross, doing good for evil, remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy, seem difficult duties to perform, we who have put our hands to the plow, may not look back, but press for the mark. Luke ix. 62. Matt. xi. 29.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 46. And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

A religion without love to God and man is of no value. It will not be accepted. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. 1 John iii. 10; iv. 21.

Christianity is a reality. It is the kingdom of God within you. And as it is a living tree it bears fruit. If it does not bear fruit, we know what its end will be. John xv. 6.

Every one that professes to be a follower of Christ must be so in fact, for it is written, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." The ways are many in which we may prove our love to God. And he that loves God will take pleasure in letting his light shine in them.

Hearing the Master's voice is one of them. "My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me." John x. 26, 27.

Again, John xiv. 23, "If a man love me, he will keep my words." This then becomes an important test of character, by which to try and test the various sects of Christians who are disputing and contending about many things. But as the gospel has some fundamental principles, it seems clear that these fundamental principles which seem to lie at the foundation of salvation, must be heartily received. These are holiness, regeneration, repentance, and justification by grace.

It seems, therefore, that all these are necessary to practice in the exercise of love to God. The divine exhortation then seems to be in place, that we mind the same thing, and all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among us; but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. i. 10.

The doctrines of grace comprise our entire depravity while we are impenitent and unregenerated; for I know that in me that is—in my flesh, while in an unregenerated state, dwelleth no good thing—nothing but a depraved and wicked nature. The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh (in an unregenerated state), can not please God, can not do one good thing, one holy act, one thing that is pleasing to him; for without faith it is impossible to please him. Well the wicked man, the impenitent sinner, has no faith, and there is no good thing dwelling in him. How full and plain is this point made, that the unconverted sinner has no grace, no holiness, no new nature, and nothing but sin. This is an essential point in maintaining the doctrine of grace. A second point is, that divine grace is necessary to enable any one to come to Christ. If he be thus dead in trespasses and sins, then he has no life to come to Christ, and can not come unless enabled by grace, as it is written, "Therefore, said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." John vi. 65.

Hypocrisy in religion will not do; nothing but truth and sincerity. To profess religion is to profess love to God. And we must love him or be hypocrites. He searches the heart and tries the reins. See what he says of insincere worshipers. Psalm lxxviii. 36, 37, 56-58. Love to God will lead us to be-

lieve his word. Deut. iv. 2. Acts ii. 41, 42. 2 Cor. xi. 4. Gal. i. 6. Rev. xxii. 18. John x. 26, 27; xiv. 23, 24.

If the doctrines of election, predestination, divine decrees, and the final perseverance of the saints are in the Bible, then they are divine truth. And not to believe them is to be an open unbeliever. He that does not believe them does not love God; for so it is taught. John x. 26, 27; viii. 47. 1 John ii. 19.

He who does not live a holy life has not piety—has not religion. Luke vi. 49. Heb. 12. 14. James ii. 18.

We can learn here the necessity of regeneration. John iii. 3, 5. We may learn also what is written. Matt. vii. 14; xxv. 12.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this.

Not having any merit of righteousness before God, but deserving favor from men, being charitable.

22. Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard.

These things that they had seen and heard showed clearly who he was; for, as men said, "No man can do these miracles except God be with him."

29. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

To justify God herein was to acknowledge him in receiving his prophet. Not receiving was rejecting, which was dishonoring God, as unbelief always does.

Sinners acted then as they do now, some believing and some disbelieving. Acts xxviii. 24. Some seeking salvation with thankful hearts, knowing that they have need of Christ's salvation; and others seem not to care what becomes of their souls.

33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine.

His meat, or food, was locusts and wild honey. John was abstemious, while the Lord ate of the good things of the table. John's raiment was coarse, rough, and homely; Christ's raiment was good and comely.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 1. And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village.

Every city must be taken with limitation, not with the latitude that Arminians ask for.

28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God Most High? I beseech thee, torment me not.

The devil prayed to the Lord, which was more than many wicked men did.

32. And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

Again they prayed to the Lord and acknowledged who he was, And he granted their request.

The evil spirit having power over the man's body, and over his will, spake by the man's voice. So when they entered the swine and possessed them, their bodies and will were under their control.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 7. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead.

Another wicked man confesses to the credibility of all that was reported of Jesus. If he had not believed those things, he would not have imputed them to a prophet that had been miraculously

raised from the dead. If Herod believed them, then others could, and they were true.

The people of this nation could not be made to believe that Independence was declared July 4, 1776, and had been annually celebrated ever since, if it were not so : equally so of the passover and eucharist.

35. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son : hear him.

How convincing were the miracles wrought to convince the disciples ! Surely they knew whether those things were true or not. If they knew them to be true, then their conduct is easily explained. If they knew that they were not true, then is their conduct inexplicable ; sacrificing every thing and their souls too.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right : this do, and thou shalt live.

He could not live for doing them ; for by the deeds of the law none can be justified ; but if he did them, had a regenerated heart, and was a believer in Christ, and would live by faith.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 23. He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

There only were two classes of mankind, the righteous and the wicked, believers and unbelievers ; those who love God, and those who do not love him, the regenerate and the unregenerate, the children of God and the children of the devil.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

There is a propensity in man to quote scripture agreeably to their principles. The passage in Matt. x. 29, is often quoted—"not one of them shall fall to the ground without your, heavenly Father's notice." And 1 Cor. xii. 7 is often quoted, "A measure of the Spirit." Mark xvi. 16, is quoted "You must believe and be baptized."

But such are all corruptions of truth.

13. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

His refusal may have been to avoid the charge of his enemies, that he was usurping civil authority.

46. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him.

It is incredible that men should live in the world carelessly about their souls when every day and every hour may be their last.

47. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Although there will be a difference made in the degree of misery; yet both are eternally lost.

57. Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Man is created in the image and likeness of God. Hence his moral character has a natural capacity that is like God's in kind, though vastly inferior in degree; for while God's is infinite ours is finite, which is an infinite difference. Another difference is, that while he is holy—perfectly immaculate, ours is depraved. This blinds our minds—obscures our moral vision, and makes it difficult for us to discern moral subjects clearly. But this is from the fall, and affords no excuse; for as sin was all wrong, it can never afford any excuse or justification. From this natural capacity arises our free agency. We are now as really free agents as we

were before the fall. But then as now, and now as then, we continue under divine sovereignty; for his is, and was, and must be the kingdom and power and glory forever. Hence this significant and stirring appeal. Yea, why do not ye of your own selves, from your own moral instincts, discern what is right? Can not every one see that theft, murder, perjury, and all evil to our fellow-man is wrong? Can we not see and understand that He who created all things has a right to them, and deserves love and worship? If a man has reason and common sense left to him, he understands that his farm, his house and his beast belong to him, and not to his neighbor. This common sense, the wreck of the natural image of God in which he was created remains in fallen man.

This we are reminded of, Rom. i. 18-20. It is manifest in us; for God hath shown it unto us—written it in us—in our consciences. Every man's conscience perceives a difference between right and wrong—between good and evil, so that they are without excuse.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Man being a free agent, does not endow him with super-human power. The high priest in Israel could not heal the leprosy, the physician can not always heal the sick, A free agent can not accomplish all his will. He can not do what belongs to the hand of Providence, as changing the atmosphere to wet or dry—to heat or cold, or make his crops bountiful, nor be sure of winning in a race, or overcoming in any contest with his neighbor, nor increase the number of his days beyond heir assigned limit.

Neither can a free agent invade the office and sovereignty of divine grace; for the Sovereign in that kingdom has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Ps. cx. 3. John xv. 6. James iv. 13. Eccl. ix. 11. Jer. xviii. 6.

While it is true that man is a free agent, it belongs only to the province of his free agency; but it is not true out of its province. He is free to enter any contest; but success in it is another affair. Eccl. ix. 11, 12.

Therefore when it is said, Matt. vii. 8, "Every one that

asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth," its application must be interpreted within the province of human agency, and not in some other province. A man builds his house with doors and windows as he will, and with rooms and apartments as he will, selects any of his fields for crops or pasture as he will, and builds ships by the water side as he will; and never builds them in the mountains, nor in the forests where timber is convenient, nor in the deep valleys remote from water. His free agency secures him liberty in all such matters. So likewise he never makes pantaloons of paper, nor a coat of beeswax, nor a bed of thorns, thistles or chestnut burrs. If in these matters a man can do as he pleases, why is he not a free agent?

But further, a man can believe and advocate the sentiments of a sect which he knows to be false, as he can indulge in practices which he knows to be wicked, as the thief, the robber, the murderer, and the adulterer do.

Criminals do not indulge vicious habits for the want of knowledge; but for the gratification of a carnal heart. While they know the right, they do the wrong. Just so it is with sects; while they have revelation, and know what is truth, believe and teach all manner of false doctrine; for their heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Jer. xvii. 9. Rom. viii. 7. 2 Kings xxviii. 29-41. Isa. lxvi. 3. John iii. 20.

Does not the Arminian know that election, predestination, and the final perseverance of the saints are true doctrines? Does not the Unitarian know the Trinity? know that the Son is one with the Father? Isa. ix. 6. John i. 1-3; x. 30. Does not the Universalist know? John iii. 16-18; v. 24.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he can not be my disciple.

As it is made the duty of every one to love these relatives as well as to love enemies, we may safely conclude that hate is to be rendered here—love less. If we do not love God more than every other object we can not be the children of God—we can not be saved.

33. So, likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he can not be my disciple.

If our hearts are not so drawn toward God for his holiness, and his grace, his greatness and his goodness, we are not Christians, have not been regenerated, are not children of God nor fitted for heavenly enjoyment.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

It is not proper to inquire who those just persons are that need no repentance, any more than to inquire who those righteous are, Matt. ix. 13, that Christ came not to call to repentance. We can get the sense of the instruction without such inquiry.

The question has been raised which is the first in order, faith or repentance? The question is answered, Matt. xxi. 32: "And ye, when ye had seen it repented not afterward that ye might believe." Faith without repentance is alone, is a dead and spurious faith, and is without an object; it can not behold Christ, nor look to him as the Savior we need if we have not that sense of our lost condition that is implied in repentance. Therefore it is said, Devils believe and tremble; but as they do not repent, their believing having no object, is without any benefit.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 4. I am resolved what to do.

The Greek word rendered I am resolved what to do, is *egnoun*, which is I know, which shows the similarity of meaning between knowing and decreeing, or resolving. See Rom. viii. 29.

8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Commended because he had acted with worldly prudence ; for men of the world use more prudence and forethought in their worldly affairs than Christians do in their spiritual affairs. Use the world, your property, so as to make your neighbors love you ; so that if you should be reduced to poverty, they may be so hospitable to you as to open their houses and entertain you for life. He does not commend him for honesty, but calls him unjust, wicked.

14. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

This confirms the foregoing interpretation ; for as the Lord had recommended a charitable use of our property, it went against the covetousness of those Pharisees, so that they made light of his advice.

16. The law and the prophets were until John : since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

The law and the prophets—the Old Testament scriptures were all the revelation the world had. And the privileges of the covenant confined its benefits to the seed of Abraham. But now the coming gospel dispensation was preached, which dispensation was to call sinners to repentance. Every man's pressing into it was prospective. The change of dispensation appeared in the preaching ; but was not realized until after Pentecost. So things that are not, are spoken of as though they were present. Rom. iv. 17. Exod. xii. 17. So the Lord said, "It is finished," before he died, because the finishing of his work of suffering, dying and rising was near at hand. And so Paul said while he was yet here in his labors, "I have finished my course," because that finishing was near. Acts xx. 24. 2 Tim. iv. 7.

22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

His soul was borne by angels into Abraham's company where the pure souls were. The anastasis—the standing up again, as a living active being, was here realized—the soul does not sleep with the body. The conversation of Abraham with the soul of the rich man illustrates this anastasis. It illustrates too his unbelief ; for he was not content with God's way of calling and warning sinners, but wanted another way adopted. But it was not any better way. We must take the Lord's way, or have no part in the salvation of Christ. Sinners may take warning, believe and receive the scriptures or perish.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 1. Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses will come: but woe unto him through whom they come.

Wicked men in the world have wicked hearts. And their wicked hearts will devise wicked things, and their wicked hands will put them in practice. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. But there is no justification nor excuse for man's wickedness. His depravity exciting and inclining him to wickedness, and the evil one prompting him to evil will form no excuse: the curse must fall upon him who doeth evil. God has pronounced it, and it must come upon him who does not repent and turn from it.

7. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

The condition of bondmen and their duties were always well known in all nations. Their rights and privileges were always abject, and unequal in society. So children were in subjection to parents, citizens to civil rulers, wives to husbands, and Christians to ecclesiastical rulers. Government and subjection are universal; and appointed for good and wise purposes. Joseph's servitude was made a great benefit to both him and his father's house. God meant it for good. So thousands who were cruelly brought from Africa, and enslaved in this country, have obtained everlasting salvation by it. They were brought into the means of salvation by it. Their songs of praise to God for it will never end.

Joseph's condition as a slave was abject. The birth of the Son of God was abject; so were his sufferings and death on the cross between two thieves. He made his grave with the wicked. But through all this abjection he was rising to a triumphant and glorious crown, and an eternal and glorious reward. In all the abject path he was treading, he said, Thy will be done.

9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

The obedience that this abject condition required, the Lord turns to account in this beautiful lesson of grace.

10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those

things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

All the good that we receive is of grace, mercy, mere favor. We do not deserve good from God for anything we do, even what may be esteemed by ourselves or others as our best performances. We have in many things sinned against God, and our best performances can never pay or atone for any one of our evil deeds. If a man kills one man he is executed, although there are a thousand whom he has not killed, but has let live. It is so written, He that offends in one point is guilty of all; he is a violator of the law, and can not be justified by it. So one sin of our first parents brought condemnation upon the world of mankind; one sin brought the curse upon the whole race. A regenerated man is, in a measure, sanctified by the Holy Spirit; yet as he is sanctified only in part, he never does any good that deserves any favor from the pure and holy Judge. This is what led the prophet Isaiah to say, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" and what led as pious a man as Job to say, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Isa. lxiv. 6. Job xl. 4; xlii. 5, 6.

The imaginary works of supererogation are only a myth, and a soul-destroying heresy. They are no invention of scripture, but the invention of ungodly men who are ignorant of the gospel.

17. And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

The wonderful goodness in the rich blessings of God so kindly and bountifully bestowed upon us sinners, are not duly appreciated—do not awaken that love and gratitude that are due to their Giver. They impose upon us a weight of responsibility that we are not aware of.

31. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop.

This has reference to the coming of the Lord at the destruction of Jerusalem. As great dangers would await them, they should make diligent haste to get away from the city.

37. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Jerusalem has lost her vital piety, and was forsaken of God ; so that in this respect she resembled a dead body—a dead carcass, that would naturally attract the fowls that feed on carrion.

The writer has seen three eagles at his barn in Williamsburg, one morning, where there was a dead carcass of a sheep, although eagles were rarely seen there.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 17. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

There must be a humbling, melting down, and bowing of the soul to have true piety ; for it is the very opposite of Pharisaism and carnal feelings. See the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Many will lose their souls by neglect of this. Those who are inattentive to it are not born again.

19. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is God.

Jesus did not wish to have empty compliments paid to him, and therefore inquired, Why this man called him good? It was then customary to compliment public benefactors thus. But he wished men to avoid mere compliments to men, and respecting of persons, without knowing good reasons.

Fallen man is a vile character in God's sight. None is immaculate but God alone.

24. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God.

It is difficult for a rich man to be saved, because it is difficult for him to be religious—to turn his heart from this world to the kingdom of God. We can not serve two masters, God and the world. Prov. xxx. 8. One man was wise enough to see that temptations are dangerous snares for souls. While a man loves the world he remains lost ; for the love of God is not in him. 1 John ii. 15.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 41. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

The Savior of sinners never laughed with sinners; but he wept over them. He who laid down his life for sinners to purchase redemption for their souls, must feel much for them, must ardently love them, and must feel an agonizing pity over their sinful and lost condition. He gave evidence of it.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

This prophecy was to be fulfilled while some of that audience should yet be living to witness it.

What ample evidence was allowed that generation to the truths of the gospel.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 7. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

As the whole of our Lord's ministry until he died on the cross, and rose from the dead, was under the Mosaic dispensation, he was bound to carefully observe every one of those ordinances, even to fulfill all the righteousness of them. At this time the feast of the passover, an ordinance of the Jewish dispensation, instituted when the people left Egypt, was still in force. But this was its termination, the last time that it could be lawfully repeated. For as it was a type of the Lord's suffering on the cross, and as that suffering was near at hand, it ended the passover. The feast could not be held after that; for it would have no meaning, have no force. All the Jewish sacrifices pointed to the same hour of Christ's suffering and death, and ended in that event. Neither could the sacraments of the gospel be in force until the Jewish dispensation ended,

and was taken out of the way, by being nailed with him to the cross. Col. ii. 14.

16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God was the gospel dispensation of the kingdom of God which he came to bring in and set up. His death would fulfill and terminate all the Mosaic dispensations, and thus make way for the introduction of the gospel dispensation. And as his life on earth, and his ministry on earth were on the point of termination, he would no more eat the passover with them; neither would they eat it with one another; for with this celebration its termination was united, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. The deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt was effected at the passover; and it typified the sacrifice of Christ, which should effect the deliverance of his people from the Jewish yoke, as well as from the yoke and condemnation of sin.

On the day of Pentecost, about fifty-four days after our Lord spake these words, that work of deliverance began to show its effects, and Christ was spiritually present with his people, rejoiced with them in all the triumphs of gospel grace. And when they celebrated the Lord's Supper, he was always spiritually present with them, and feasting with them.

18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

That is, until the gospel dispensation should come of the fruit of the vine; until the kingdom of God shall come.

And this is an admission that then he will be spiritually present with them, and feasting with them. The fruit of the vine—the wine used both at the passover and the eucharist—was the product of the grapevine. And as it remained the fruit of the vine, they had been drinking wine during both feasts; and when it should be taken anew in the gospel dispensation it was to be still the fruit of the vine, proves that there would be no change in the substance. The doctrine of transubstantiation is disproved. At the feast of the Lord's Supper we still have and use the fruit of the vine. There has been no change; it has not been turned into God; and it could not be; for God is immutable. He can not be turned into anything else; neither can anything else be turned into him. If the bread of the eucharist which was baked yesterday, was to-day at the feast turned into God, it is not the immutable, but a mutable, a changeable one; and that can not be the true God, but can only be a false god—an idol. The fanatics who wor-

ship it do so to their own ruin. How easy is it to know the truth.

24. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

This was an eventful occurrence; for it threw light upon the question of popery, which is a practical question of great importance; for popery is an embodiment of sacrilege, idolatry and blasphemy. It robs God of his prerogatives, pardoning sins, not for the atonement of Christ, but for money, in the face of Acts viii. 20. Popery is one of the most deceitful, enticing, God-dishonoring, and soul-destroying heresies. And with all the other heresies should be more continually opposed and protested against.

44. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

No man can conceive the greatness of his agony when he was bearing the Father's wrath for sinners. His sweat issuing from the pores of his body, by coming from the sorrows of his inmost soul, were as if his heart were shedding them. But they were sweat. Isa. lii. 14. Matt. viii. 28. Psalm xxii. 6-21. Lam. i. 12. See verse 63.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 47. Now, when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

The earthquake, and darkness of night that shut them in from twelve at noon until three in the afternoon, were more than his conscience could withstand, when he saw that the God of nature was frowning upon their wickedness. Had they not been desperately hardened they would all have made confession.

56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.

The comment to keep the Sabbath day holy, did not allow them to do anything about burying the dead on that day.

JOHN.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. In the beginning.

We may not be able to fix and limit the duration or time which this designates. But we may be safe in concluding from other passages, that it has no limit; for, if he created all things he was before them; and if he had glory with the Father before the world was, then he existed before the world was. John xvii. 5. And if he was the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, then he is the Eternal One: nothing existed before him; and nothing shall exist after him. These affirmations about the Word show in the clearest manner that he is the eternal God. What else he was is shown in other places, as Isa. ix. 6; verse 14. Rom. viii. 3; ix. 5. 1 John v. 7.

The trinity of persons in the Godhead is as clearly and plainly taught as it need be, or could be; and if it be incomprehensible, what is there about infinity that is not incomprehensible.

If we reject the doctrine of the trinity for this reason, we profess to know better about infinite things than the author of revelation, and make ourselves infidels. The ways and thoughts of the Infinite One are above us and our ways and thoughts, as the heavens are above us. Humility is therefore common sense.

2. The same was in the beginning with God.

When beginning is used in application to any thing, it must be interpreted by the history of the subject. But when it is used in relation to God and things, we must interpret it rather in relation to the history of the things, and not in relation to the history of the Infinite One who has no history, and no beginning. But it is a clear truth, that, in the beginning of creation and created things, God existed: and he existed before them; for if he did not exist before them, he could not create them. Reason and common sense then must agree with this passage, that the Word, or the Second Person of the Godhead existed in the beginning.

The Word in verse first, and here alluded to, relates to the divine nature only : for the human nature of Christ had not such an early existence ; but took its beginning when the Holy Ghost came upon Mary to cause a supernatural conception. Matt. i. 20. Isa. vii. 14.

3. All things were made by him.

God is the Creator of the universe ; because it is so written, and because there is no other existing power to do it. If God created the universe, and if the Word did it, then the Word was God, as affirmed in verse 1.

4. In him was life ; and the life was the light of men.

God, even the three persons in the Godhead, honored the Son by giving him the work of creation ; therefore all life and all light, both natural and spiritual, are in the Word, and are derived from him, and exhibit both his creation and providence.

5. And the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehended it not.

The invisible things of God are clearly exhibited by creation, even his eternal power and Godhead. Rom. i. 20. Since the fall man is corrupt, both in morals and intellect, respecting divine things. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Although Jesus proved his divine mission by a thousand incontestable miracles ; yet the Jews did not comprehend or apprehend the truth ; for had they known, they would not have crucified him. 1 Cor. ii. 8. The evidence of divine things is clear, intelligible and demonstrative ; yet men's minds are so dull that they do not receive the evidence, or light. Even the twelve when they were so plainly told, did not know that he was to be put to death, and rise again. Mark ix. 32. Luke ii. 50. Even now men who read the Bible remain ignorant of many of the plainest things revealed. For instance, repentance precedes faith, as a sense of disease precedes application to a physician. Matt. xxi. 32.

That every thing about burying the dead is improper on the Sabbath. Luke xxiii. 56.

That the Sabbath is to be kept holy. Exod. xx. 10, 11. Isa. lviii. 13.

And women's wearing men's garments is an abomination to the Lord. Deut. xxii. 5.

And that slavery is venial. Gen. iv. 7 ; xxvii. 29. Lev. xxv. 44-46. Exod. xxi. 7. 1 Tim. vi. 1-5. †

Women should be silent in the church, unless they assist in singing. 1 Tim. ii. 11-13.

If women do take any active part in prayer or exhortation, they must have their heads covered. 1 Cor. ii. 5.

Men do not know that wearing the hair long is a shame to them. 1 Cor. xi. 14.

Men do not know that they must think other better than themselves. Phil. ii. 3.

Neither do they seem to know that they must love others, as they love themselves. Matt. xxii. 39.

Many disbelieve, reject, and hate doctrines plainly taught in the Bible, as election, decrees, predestination, total depravity, and the certain final perseverance of the saints, and do not know what they do. Luke xxiii. 34. 1 John v. 10.

Many do not know that fasting is a precious duty. Matt. ix. 15. And when they pretend to fast they do not really do it; for they do not know that they must abstain from every indulgence. Dan. vi. 18. Exod. xxxiii. 4. Isa. lviii. 5. Jonah iii. 6, 7.

Men do not understand the duty of hospitality. Philem. 7. 1 Pet. iv. 9. 1 Tim. v. 10.

How many are ignorant of Matt. xxiii. 9, 10, and exalt bishops as they are forbidden to do. And the Pope a universal bishop, God's viceregent; and even "Our Lord God."

How many are ignorant that the scriptures are to control our belief. Rev. xxii. 18. 2 Cor. xiii. 8. Gal. i. 8. Matt. xx. 25.

Finally, how many professing Christians believe that God is mutable. And how many believe that he is created or made every day, made out of bread; and so as to become really God: and bow in reverence and worship to him, and require others to do it.

How evidently true is that scripture which says, The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it. Men believe what pleases themselves, and do not intend to please God. In doing so they serve themselves, and not God. Rom. vi. 16. Acts v. 29. John xii. 26. Rom. xvi. 18.

6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

This was John the Baptist. He was an eminent prophet in teaching; though he wrought no miracle. He was a forerunner of Christ; and came for the express object of introducing Christ and the gospel dispensation. When he commenced his ministry he said to the Jewish people, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The meaning of which was, repent, or do the first work of a good life, and of piety

toward God; for the gospel dispensation which you have so long expected, is now just at hand, by the coming of the promised Messiah, the King of Israel, the Redeemer of men.

John's ministry was not in, nor under, the gospel dispensation; but it was entirely under the Jewish dispensation as really as was that of Moses or Jeremiah. The ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, like that of John, was also all entirely under the legal or Jewish dispensation. There was no mixing of the dispensations, no confusion of them. He whose mind is not clear on this point can not understand the gospel.

If the ministry of Christ himself was under the Jewish dispensation, then certainly John's was so. And that Christ's was so, is expressly declared. Rom. xv. 8. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. The whole life and ministry of Christ proved this. He was circumcised the eighth day; and the sacrifice required by the law of Moses of a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons, was offered. Luke ii. 21-24.

All the law of sacrifices and ceremonies was yet in force, and remained so during all his ministry: and was finished at his death, being nailed to the cross with him. Col. ii. 14. All the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jewish ritual had to be carefully observed by the Savior.

Why did our Lord eat the passover? Was it a gospel feast? Why was it said, "Then came the day of unleavened bread when the passover must be killed?" Luke xxii. 7. The Jewish dispensation was in full force during all our Lord's ministry, and until he was offered a sacrifice on the cross, which fulfilled, ended, and finished the law of sacrifices. Christ was the last sacrifice that the law of Moses demanded or admitted of; therefore he said on the cross, "It is finished." The atonement was finished. The whole legal dispensation was finished. Nothing has been added to it since. Nothing can be added to it. All the pretended sacrifices that are yet offered are corruptions introduced by heretics and the enemies of the gospel; and even Antichrist, for they take the blasphemous ground that Christ has not completed his work, and they are doing it for him. The baptism of John was not a gospel ordinance, and had no relation to it, except that it required them who received it to promise to receive Christ at some future time when he should come, which was near at hand.

7. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

The Lord Jesus was the light here spoken of, and the same as in verse 4, and Luke ii. 32.

Although the gospel dispensation was not yet open for the admission of either Jews or Gentiles, yet it would soon be open to both : and so soon that it was desirable even now to invite both to give their attention, and their hearts to it.

9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

As he is the Creator of all men, and of the universe, he must be the author of all their gifts and endowments. All the light they enjoy is from him who made them by his hand, and governs them by his providence. The light of life, the light of nature, the light of reason, the light of revelation ; all the light that any one has is derived from him actually, really and truly. If some hard-hearted and unbelieving sinners would not receive the light, then they could not be enlightened by him any further than they received it. Luke vii. 30. 1 John iv. 3. Jude 19. John i. 5, 11. Every man is under darkness in some degree ; but all the light he has is from Christ. If some men reject the gospel, and reject the light of salvation, they must perish. They have the light in gracious kindness offered them ; but if they do not receive it, it will be worse for them than if it had not been given or offered them. The world knew him not, verse 10. If the world knew him not, then they were destitute of gospel light—the light of salvation by their unbelief.

13. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Fallen man is so lost that he can not recover nor save himself. He can not pardon his sins, nor give himself repentance, nor regenerate himself, nor sanctify himself, nor adopt himself. God must do the work of all his works in him, or he must remain where he is, a lost sinner forever. John xv. 5 ; vi. 65.

14. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

There was no change of substance, no transubstantiation. The Word means, the Second Person of the Godhead. It was made flesh means, united to human flesh in the man Jesus, the Son of Mary.

16. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

All we, means all Christians. Grace for grace means, he

who has any sanctifying grace shall receive more. Eph. i. 5; xi. 19. Col. i. 21; ii. 13. Mark iv. 25.'

18. No man hath seen God at any time.

No man now on earth—no man now living hath ever seen God. Exod. xxiv. 9. John v. 37.

21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

John was not the prophet Elias (Elijah). The next inquiry perhaps we do not understand. But commentators suppose it meant the same as the other, Art thou Elijah, being only as a repetition of it, which is said to have been the custom of inquiry at that day.

John was the prophet who was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah to introduce Christ to Israel. Isa. xl. 3.

25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then?

To this question John does not give any answer. But his whole teaching answered it. He administered baptism to enjoin two duties upon the people, viz: to repent of sin, turn from it, and to believe in Christ when he should be manifested. He did not baptize because they so believed but to engage them to a future faith. His baptism was therefore entirely a different thing from gospel baptism, which was not yet instituted. Acts xix. 1-5. Matt. xxviii 19.

27. He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

Christ came into the world about six months after John, being about so much younger; but he was before John in his attributes, being John's Creator and Redeemer, so that John was unworthy to untie the shoes of Christ.

28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

When John commenced his ministry, he commenced it in the wilderness of Judea, some distance from Jordan, where he preached and administered baptism. He seems to have had no use for the river, until such multitudes gathered as to make a want for the multitude of people and their stock. And then he would naturally repair to the river for their accommodation. John x. 40. Matt. iii. 1.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 13. And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

It was necessary for him to eat the passover and to observe all the Jewish ordinances ; for all the law of Moses was yet in force ; and he was a minister under that dispensation. Rom. xv. 8. Matt. v. 18. This was the first passover that he attended after he entered upon his ministry ; which he did not commence until he was thirty years old. Luke iii. 23. Num. iv. 3-5.

14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting.

As these articles which they had for sale were all used in the worship of the temple, the ignorant and profane could easily persuade themselves that it was lawful for them to furnish them to worshipers at the temple. But traffic in them, and changing money were profaning the house of God, as men do now everywhere in taking up collections in the house of God, and excuse them because the money is put to some pious use. So they might make brick and get out timber to build a church. Or they might print, bind and sell Bibles and hymn books, because they are for pious use.

The house of God is a sacred place where such carnal things can have no place. And the Sabbath day is set apart for divine worship only. And all the carnal notices given from the pulpit of picnics and sewing circles, and many others, only prove how the church is fallen.

The worship of God is the appropriate business of the Sabbath and of the sacred desk. We should enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Ps. c. 4. In entering the gates it must be with solemnity and worship, and then enter the house of God with awe and reverence, not rushing heedlessly into his presence as the horse rushing into the battle. Neither minister nor people may be incumbered with appointments and notices of any kind to be mingled with the sacred and solemn business of the house of God. We should be in the spirit on the Lord's day and in the Lord's house. No meeting of the session or presbytery may be announced, nor any meeting of the tract, Bible, or missionary society. They may meet on their own adjournment ; or notices of them may be posted for the in-

formation of the public. Any mention of them, or any thought of them, is out of place at divine worship and a violation of the holy Sabbath. Such things turn away the mind from proper meditation, and hinder devotions. "And we must lay aside every weight." Heb. xii. 1. We can not attend to both business and devotion in the sacred hour appropriated to worship without mocking God. When he says, "My son, give me thine heart," we may not occupy ourselves with other things that divert the mind from devotion. How often has the minister's heart sunk, when after some solemn appeal to the souls of his hearers, he has turned their attention to notices and appointments. Sometimes it is attempted to remedy by giving the notices earlier; and requiring the congregation to charge their minds with the burden of their recollection during the sermon. Thus making it impossible to give their undivided attention to the sermon. Herein the command to keep holy the Sabbath day is violated, and the sanctuary is not revered; nor is every weight laid aside.

21. But he spake of the temple of his body.

From this instance we discern that in our Lord's ministry he did not always intend that his hearers should understand him. Matt. xiii. 9-14. John xiii. 7.

But although they understood not at the time, it was not lost to them, as appears in the following verse 22.

23. Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

The miracles were so plainly wrought by divine power that they could not be doubted, nor explained away; they knew that he was the Son of God. To believe in his name was to believe that he was what his name declared, the Son of God; which was understood to mean that he was a divine person, and was God. John v. 18.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

This was sound reasoning; they did know that He was

commissioned of God and spake the truth of God. Why he came by night we do not know; his business may have required it. If some have given a reason, it was an unwarranted assumption, which was unlawful and irreverent, for we may not add to God's word—how can any add to divine revelation?

The word Rabbi was a title of respect for him as a competent teacher or master.

3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.

This is easily understood and clearly means that, as fallen man is depraved by the fall, is a lost condemned sinner, he must be regenerated by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost or he can not enter heaven, the holy residence of saints and angels.

4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Although this regeneration had always been equally necessary, it had not always been taught in this figurative language. And Nicodemus did not understand it. If its language were new, the doctrine taught was not new. Lev. xix. 2. Ezek. xviii. 21. A depraved sinner can in no other way be prepared for heaven, without undergoing this radical change. Nicodemus did not know that our Lord was speaking of spiritual things. Therefore the Lord explained it to him in the subsequent conversation.

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.

Still our Lord is teaching spiritual things under figurative language. Water, here, is not literal; it is a figure of purification that was common in the law and the prophets. And it ought to have been well understood by Nicodemus. David said, "I will wash my hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." Ps. xxvi. 6. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Ps. li. 2, 7. Isa. i. 16-18.

Pilate understood the emblematical use of this figure of water when he took water and washed his hands before the

multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." Matt. xxvii. 24. The Lord showed the same when he poured water into a basin, and proposed to wash his disciples' feet; and said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." John xiii. 8. This is not meant to teach that there was efficacy in this washing, but it had a spiritual allusion to sanctification by the Holy Spirit, which was indispensable. That there is efficacy in water to purify the soul is not taught on this point, "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God." Jer. ii. 22.

Neither is there any allusion to the sacrament of water baptism, for that would prove that it was not true. The thief on the cross had the promise of salvation without water baptism.

Besides the sacrament of water baptism was not yet revealed, and could not be alluded to in these remarks on sanctification. And was not revealed until the Lord had risen from the dead. Matt. xxviii. 19. And another reason is, that the sacrament of baptism has no efficacy in the salvation of the subject, as is shown in the case of Simon who was baptized by Philip. Acts viii. 13, 21. Neither has the external reception of the eucharist any saving effect, but the contrary, if it be without sanctification. 1 Cor. xi. 27. We ought carefully to avoid a carnal interpretation of spiritual things.

There is an important lesson taught us in this verse, that furnishes a rule of interpretation that will aid us in another passage. In reading this verse in the original language, the Greek scholar will perceive that, to make the meaning of entering the kingdom of God positive, the preposition *eis* is twice repeated, being prefixed to the verb and also placed before the noun, as it is in the Greek. See John xx. 3, 4, 5, 6, where the preposition being placed only before the noun means to the sepulcher, but when also prefixed to the verb it means into or enter, as John xx. 5, as in the verse under consideration.

6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The Savior is speaking to the point, and answering Nicodemus' question about entering into the mother's womb to be born again. And telling him that such a natural birth is not the one that he is speaking of; but he is speaking of the spiritual birth of which the soul only is the subject. That which is born of flesh is the man's body, but that which is the subject, the spiritual birth, is the soul, *i. e.*, the soul only is the subject of this new birth. A man need not enter his mother's

womb in order to be born of the Spirit, for the Spirit can perform this regenerating work upon the spirit of man in his body or where it is. The soul or spirit being the subject of this work God can sanctify or change it in the man.

The Savior is not alluding to the moral change, as to its character, as differing from the moral character of the subject of the natural birth. This we perceive and know by the substantives which he uses. When men must wrest his meaning they also wrest his language, and adopt adjectives in the place of those substantives. By this fact they might become aware of their error and understand that the Lord says, the body or flesh is the subject of natural birth, but the soul or spirit is alone the subject of second birth.

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Marvel not, do not think strange that this change should be necessary to any man's salvation, for man is a sinner, a lost depraved being, and can not enter the pure and holy sanctuary of heavenly bliss without a change that will qualify him for enjoying it. Heb. xii. 14. Rev. xxi. 27.

8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.

The work of regeneration is as invisible to us as the breeze that is moving by us. And yet it is effected by the exertion of Omnipotence. Eph. i. 19, 20.

12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

The regeneration of sinners is called an earthly thing because it takes place on earth among men, and they ought to be well acquainted with its credibility. Although it be thus called an earthly thing yet it is entirely a spiritual work. It is correctly called an earthly thing for the reason given above. It is very common in the scriptures for words to be used when only part of their quality is retained, or is applicable to the subject.

13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

No man; if the Lord intended to restrict it to his audience

it would be true; for not one of them had ever so ascended while dwelling in the body. But the Son of man in his divine nature, was always in heaven, never having left it for one moment, for he as God is omnipresent. We do not see how his assertion can be understood without restricting it to his own audience or his own generation, of both which it would be intelligible; but Enoch and Elijah of preceding generations had so ascended. But exceptions that are so obvious are sometimes omitted as unnecessary, as John ix. 2. Deut. i. 35, 36; vii. 24. Josh. xxiii. 6, 8. They had not performed the condition, Josh. xxiii. 6, to neither spare any of the Canaanites nor make covenant with them. Judges ii. 2, 3.

The passage under discussion must also be restricted to men's ascending while in the body, for the souls of the pious dead had ascended. But men whom he was addressing had not ascended, for they were yet in the body.

14. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.

The brazen figure, the mere appearance of a serpent was raised upon a pole above the heads of the people that those wounded might look at it. So the Savior was raised upon the cross at his crucifixion. And thus in reading the gospel with the eyes of our mind, we see Him, so that by faith we may be justified and saved.

It is here worthy of note that things in revelation are called by the name of that which they appear to be, or which they have resemblance to. The serpent, *i. e.*, the representation of a serpent. See Gen. xviii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. viii. 11. Rom. xiv. 15. Josh. x. 13.

17. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

The world here is to be confined exclusively to those among men who were pious believers, penitent believers, for salvation was neither provided, promised nor given to any more nor to any other; it would be of no use; if not made willing he would not receive it.

It is written, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me." "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." It being in God's hands and in God's power would not offend or grieve the pious elect so as to prevent them from coming to bow at the footstool of mercy, and cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. If any poor sinner of our lost and guilty and depraved

race comes to Jesus with his heart, repenting, believing and loving God, he will not be cast out, for this temper of mind is all that is meant by coming to Jesus. The opposite state of mind is rejecting him. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. Until God graciously, by his mighty power, subdues and takes away this carnal mind—the enmity against God—no sinner can come to Jesus. As long as the proud, carnal, stubborn sinner hates God he does not come to him. Or if he professes to approach him it is only hypocrisy, and is odious and insulting to God, as is shown in the seventy-eighth Psalm. If a sinner be convicted of sin and feels the necessity of the Savior, it is God by his Spirit that has produced that conviction. If he feels that he deserves eternal death, and that God would be just and righteous in his destruction, it is the Holy Spirit that has impressed this truth upon him of his free and sovereign grace, and not for any good works of the sinner, for he has no good works they always are evil. He is condemned already. John iii. 18. Rom. x. 10.

18. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

No one is in Christ, justified, forgiven or accepted but those who have repented, believed with their heart, being born again and sanctified by the Holy Ghost. All others are yet in their sins and under condemnation.

All mankind who are not born again are sinners, and already lost and condemned, both infants and adults. As it is written, "Conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity;" "and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph. ii. 3. There were many infants in Sodom, but there were not ten righteous persons there, or it would not have been destroyed, and they all perished with the adults. When the Israelites were sent to destroy the wicked Canaanites, they were required to destroy them all. Deut. vii. 16. 1 Sam. xv. 3. The condemnation of the whole human race commenced with the fall of man when he ate the forbidden fruit.

All being thus lost and condemned the Judge can now save whom he will, or have mercy on whom he will have mercy.

20. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

An unconverted sinner hates the truth which is light, and

does not try to know it; he will not come to it, nor let it come to him. He reads it in the word but receives it not.

22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized.

After those lessons of instruction were given. And Christ baptized, by having his disciples to do it. He himself did not administer baptism. John iv. 2. What this baptism was we are not told. It seems to have been only a continuation of John's baptism.

23. And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

A place west of Jordan in Canaan, about five or ten miles north of Jerusalem, where there were springs of gushing water, as the name Enon signifies. As John commenced his ministry and administered baptism in the wilderness of Judea beyond Jordan, Matt. iii. 1; John x. 40, it is evident that he did need much water for that purpose.

The exact place of this Enon is not now known. But the latest writer on Palestine, Dr. Barclay, thinks it was situated some five miles northeast of Jerusalem.

27. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

This is a pure gospel sentiment; for as all men are sinners, lost and condemned sinners, they must every one be in the hands of God to save or destroy as he will. A sinner can not pardon himself, nor regenerate himself, nor sanctify himself. It must all come from above; and it must all be given him of free grace, if he receives it at all; for it can not be dependent on his works, nor upon any thing that he does, or can do.

35. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

The Son is the perfection of goodness, greatness, and obedience, so that being the express image of the Father's person, he was deemed worthy to have all things given into his hand: for he will do all things well. If any one is God's vicegerent on earth it must be the Son. It can not be any man; for man has not the ability for the office; as it requires both infinite wisdom, and almighty power. The pope thus professing to be this vicegerent, shows himself to be Antichrist, as Luther described him. The pope arrogates a jurisdiction to which

he has not been called nor appointed of God. For where has God appointed any pope? or any man, but the man Christ Jesus to this office, or to this authority?

It can not be inferred from the right to pardon sins, for two reasons. See comments on John xx. 23.

36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

To believe on the Son unto salvation, is to cordially acquiesce in the whole gospel plan of redemption, love it all from the heart, and to show it by the appropriate fruits. This supposes and requires regeneration, or the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost: for no other one is a believer. If some think that they are believers, although they are impenitent and not regenerated, they deceive themselves; for the devils believe and tremble. The faith of an impenitent, an unregenerate sinner, is a dead faith, that increases and aggravates his condemnation. He that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

He that is not converted—not born again, is in the gall of bitterness. Such the scriptures call unbelievers, because the faith they have is no more than the faith of devils, or that of Simon. Acts viii. 13, 18, 21.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 2. Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples.

The translation does not explain the meaning of this verse. But the translation to make it explicit needs the word baptized to be appended to the end, thus: Jesus himself baptized not; but his disciples baptized. The word disciples being in the nominative case in the original, shows this to be the meaning: similar to John xxi. 15. 2 Tim. iv. 3. Thus we have, in some instances, to refer to the original to prove the meaning of a passage, to remedy the neglect of the translators.

19. The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

We see how the Lord in the train of conversation led her

on by degrees until she perceived that he was a prophet of God.

20. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

She was warmly engaged on this party question.

21. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

1. The true and full meaning is not here expressed as is often the case; for the Lord did not mean, that under the gospel dispensation, which was what was meant by the hour that was coming, men might not worship God any where, and every where. But he meant to teach that it would not be confined exclusively to any one place. Neither in this mountain only, nor yet at Jerusalem only, shall ye worship, but everywhere.

2. Another instance in Prov. xxvi. 2, where the subject is only suggested, and not expressed, "As the bird by wandering, and the swallow by flying; so the curse causelessly shall not come." The bird by wandering, and the swallow by flying obtain their daily food, there is an adequate cause; so the curse upon fallen angels and fallen men shall not come without cause.

See also Isa. lviii. 13. 1 Tim. iv. 3.

26. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am.

This is the way it reads in the original; the pronoun *he* being omitted, as was the custom. But it was understood by them just as if the pronoun had been expressed as it is in our language. The reason why the pronoun is put in italics is because it is not in the original. Matt. xxvi. 25, 64.

48. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

Things are often called by the name of what they appear to be, and not by the name of what they really are. This gave the ruler an opportunity of showing his faith decidedly. So the scriptures speak of sun's rising and going down just as we do when we know that it is otherwise. It would sound awkward to say, The eastern horizon sinks, so that the sun appears to rise; or the western horizon rises, so that the sun appears to go down. Ps. xix. 4, 5, 6. Gen. xv. 12. Exod. xvii. 12. Deut. xvi. 6. Josh. x. 27; xii. 13. See also Rom. iv. 17. 1 Cor. viii. 9, 10. Rom. xiv. 15.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 10. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

Some persons adopt eagerly those constructions that seem to favor the desecration of the holy Sabbath. But it is bad fruit, and betrays a wrong temper of mind. It would be wrong to take his bed or any other burden from his home and carry it abroad. But his bed fell upon his hands to be carried unexpectedly, and therefore it was lawful to carry it upon the Lord's day. If a man were returning from church, and his horse should fall dead under him, it would be right to take the saddle and bridle, and carry them home. A man need not leave his bed or his saddle in the street in such cases, as, not being foreseen, could not be provided for; for the Sabbath was made for man: not for man to trample upon; but for man to profit by; and to use as unforeseen emergencies may require. If his family are suddenly taken with disease, or his house take fire, he may omit attending worship to call a physician, to attend upon the sick, or to extinguish the fire. But if the sickness occurred before the Sabbath, then to wait until the holy day to call the physician would be a violation of it.

22. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.

The Son having in himself all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9, is capable of this trust.

23. That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.

This shows very plainly who the Son is. We honor the Father by giving to him divine worship, and ascribing to him the infinite perfections of Jehovah. Now if we must thus honor the Son, then we consider him to be no less than the Infinite Jehovah. But if we make him to be not the Eternal God himself—not the Almighty God, but some inferior being; then we deny the unity of God, and hold a plurality of Gods; for if the Son be not equally the Almighty with the Father, then he is a different being, an inferior being—another God, or another something, we know not what. If then we worship him, we are idolaters. And if we do not worship him we break this commandment to honor him as we honor the Father.

The Son therefore is clearly the Eternal Jehovah, the Al-

mighty God, the Everlasting Father, as the prophet calls him. Isa. ix. 6.

26. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.

‡ It is beyond our capacity to comprehend the Infinite Jehovah. But God kindly gives us to know something about him. We understand that his ways and thoughts are above ours as the heavens are above the earth. He here tells us that the Father put it into the hands and power of the Son to have life in himself. Here is more than we can comprehend, for if the three persons are equally divine, then each one must necessarily have life in himself and retain it immutably. But this passage suggests an explanation which is as satisfactory as it is indispensable. The three persons of the Godhead have by a mutual agreement given to one another the several parts which they are to take in the display of the divine perfections in the great work of our redemption. That this is thus intimated to us, appears also from verse 22, in which it is said, That the Father judgeth no man, but has committed, etc. This commitment to the Son of this exclusive jurisdiction seems fully to warrant the above suggestion of a conventional agreement between the persons of the Godhead, assigning the parts which are for each person. Then we can form some idea of the precedence of one and the subjection of another among those who are naturally equals. Such conventional assignments of parts to be performed by each, is consistent with their natural equality. Such a conventional arrangement is common among civil corporations; directors, of equal grade, assign one of their number to the presidency, another to the treasury, another to the secretaryship, and another to the office of auditor, and others *ad libitum*. Harmony is conserved and promoted by it. Verses 22 and 26 seem to teach it. We can perceive how it harmonizes the equal perfections of the divine persons of the Godhead with the precedence of One, and the subjection of others in the administration of the various affairs of creation and redemption. Herein wisdom, humility and goodness are exhibited and harmony conserved; and an example set before angels to excite adoration and imitation.

30. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

If the official work performed by the Son was in accordance with the convention or covenant of redemption between the

persons of the Trinity, then it was not the alone will of any one of them separately; but was the united expression of the will of the whole Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: the seal of the whole Trinity was set to it.

The Son disclaimed it as being of his own power or authority separately. "I can of mine own self do nothing." Although he had power to do it by himself; for all power in heaven and in earth was given to him, and was in him, Matt. xxviii. 18, yet he did not exercise this official prerogative in any instance without the concurrence and will of the whole Trinity; for he did not seek his own private or separate will; but the will of the Father who sent him. His own will, however, was necessarily embodied in it, for else he could not have joined in doing it; for he and his Father are one. John x. 30.

36. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

The works that Jesus did before a thousand witnesses proved clearly his divine mission. So the spectators confessed. John iii. 2. Every one whose mind was not warped by prejudice, and blind unbelief, knew the truth that was so plainly demonstrated in a thousand instances before their eyes.

38. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

In John xyii. 17, it is written, "Thy word is truth." As these unbelievers had not his word, they had not his truth abiding in them. Therefore they were on the side of error, falsehood and ungodliness. It is written, "By their fruits, ye (the disciples) shall know them." By the rejection of light and truth so plainly, and so abundantly demonstrated before their eyes, they proved that their reason and faculties were perverted by obstinate unbelief.

39. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

The Old Testament was all the scripture they had at that time. And it contained all the testimony that was needed to show with what they daily saw, that Jesus was the Son of God, the long promised Messiah. A diligent searching now of the Old Testament could hardly fail of convincing any

reasonable man of the divine authority that was evinced in Christ's ministry.

He came at the time told by Daniel, ix. 24-27.

He was conceived, as told by Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6.

His birth was in Bethlehem, as told by Micah, v. 2.

His great sufferings, and the object, by Isa. liii. Ps. xxii.

See also Gen. xxii. 13; xlix. 10. Deut. viii. 18.

But when an ungodly man reads the sacred writings with a wicked heart, and a caviling spirit, he may profit by it; but he is in danger of being more hardened and more blinded. A man should search for truth as he searches after hidden treasure.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 2. And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

These miracles were not a few special cases artfully contrived and gotten up to be palmed off upon the people for what they were not; but were real cures performed upon hundreds or thousands of the people, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free. They were in great variety. Some were upon those born invalids, some were upon those who had fevers, some were upon those who had demoniacs, some were upon those who died, and were resuscitated; some performed upon the elements, as the winds and the sea; and all were just as obvious realities as the shining of the sun; and were just as clearly seen and known as the shining of the sun: and it is not strange that the multitudes followed so wonderful a character.

3. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

Now every reader knows, or ought to know as well as he knows his own name, that the Lord did not enter the ground or land of the mountain, but only went up to the side of the mountain, and there sat on a seat, or on the ground with his disciples. The prepositions are used for almost any relation, and they indicate various relations; so that in the absence of more stable data it will not do to found doctrines upon them.

The Baptists therefore founding their denomination on the preposition *into*, Acts viii. 38, and the preposition *in*, Mark i.

9, have no foundation that will sustain them. Matt. iv. 8. John iv. 20; v. 1; xiv. 23; xvii. 1, it is said that Jesus went into the mountain, which we know means only on the mountain. And the army of Israel is said to have gone in the midst of the sea on dry ground. Exod. xiv. 16, 22. We therefore know that "in the midst of the sea" means the place of the sea, and not the waters of it. In like manner "in Jordan" means no more than at Jordan, or within the banks of the river, and not in the flowing waters of it; as the priests stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan. Josh. iii. 17. John thus could baptize the Lord within the banks of Jordan without going into the waters of the river. So all John's baptisms at Jordan could have been by the side of the stream by taking up water and putting upon them.

But it is impossible to argue for immersion in the sacrament of gospel baptism from any thing which John did, even if he immersed his disciples; for the sacrament of gospel baptism, and the sacrament of the eucharist were not appointed, nor instituted until several years afterward. John's baptism was not that sacrament as Paul showed. Acts xix. 1-5.

14. Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world.

To make five loaves of bread, and two small fishes, supply a meal for five thousand men was sufficient evidence of divine power to satisfy the reason of any unprejudiced mind.

17. And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum.

Here in the original language to show that Jesus entered the ship, or went on shipboard, the preposition *en* is affixed to the Greek verb, and the preposition *eis* is translated toward.

29. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

This is believing in Christ.

33. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

It is a characteristic of revelation to deal so extensively in metaphorical language. Believing on him with the heart is called eating his flesh, and drinking his blood. And it is called eating him. And it is called eating the bread that came down from heaven.

As this faith is what takes away sin and saves the soul ; and is the only saving remedy for any of our fallen race, it is the only remedy for the whole, or in the whole world. Therefore he is called the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. But it is taught with equal plainness, that this salvation is bestowed only upon those who are real believers, out of the world, out of all the men in the world ; for those of our fallen world who do not so believe on him, must perish.

37. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

If any of our fallen race does come thus to the Savior, he will surely be saved ; all that are given by the Father to the Son will surely come. And those who are not so given will not come. Verses 44, 65.

39. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

This needs no comment. The writer believes it as he believes the hundred others that agree with it, as John vi. 37, 39, 44, 65. Job iv. 7 ; xvii. 9. Ps. xxxix. 17, 25 ; lv. 22 ; and all other scriptures.

Every sinner that comes to Christ believes it ; for this is coming to Christ, and believing in him. Nothing else is coming or believing.

66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

They turned away from the company of those who followed him. They were not lovers of Christ, nor lovers of the truth : and therefore they could not bear the truth. It grieved and offended them ; for their tempers of mind were too pharisaical to receive the soul-humblng doctrines of grace ; they needed the meekness of children. Mark x. 15.

All unconverted sinners would like a salvation that is in their own hands, and in their own power. They do not like a salvation that depends on God's free and sovereign grace, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy. If no one can come to Christ unless God give him to come, give him the power, the heart, and the grace to come to Christ, and to lay hold on him by faith, he is displeased with such a gospel, and turns away from it ; it does not suit his pharisaical heart ; he is too proud to submit to such terms. Will a poor helpless sinner rather lose his soul than come to One

who has power to save him, knowing that he can not pardon himself, nor regenerate himself, nor sanctify himself, nor adopt himself into the children, family, and sons of God? Will he not gladly come to One who can do it all, without money and without price? Would he rather be lost than be saved by grace? Paul on his way to Damascus was not so. The publican in the parable, who knew that he was a vile sinner, was not so opposed to salvation by grace, and such a justification of the ungodly. Rom. iv. 5. The leper who came to Jesus was not so, but said, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Matt. viii. 2. The centurion who was unworthy that Jesus should come under his roof, or to go to him, was not unwilling to be blessed of grace without any merit of his own, and received it so.

While the sinner retains this unhumiliated heart—this opposition to free and sovereign grace—to God's having mercy on whom he will, and hardening whom he will, he can not be saved; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Jas. iv. 6. 1 Pet. v. 5. Those only who have the grace of humility, can have the grace of salvation. The Lord had reference to this subject when he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." Matt. v. 20; and in the parable of the pharisee and publican. Luke xviii. 9.

The spirit of those who are opposed to grace—free and sovereign grace—opposed to God's having mercy on whom he will, is the very spirit of Antichrist. And God has revealed this sovereign grace in the doctrine of election, predestination, and the perseverance of the saints. Those who impudently disbelieve it make God a liar, 1 John v. 10, and show themselves infidels.

It is no small affair to disbelieve God and make him a liar, as every one does who denies the doctrines of grace, as election and final perseverance.

70. Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

He was a devil in heart and conduct; but he was a man by birth, as other men are. It has seemed strange to many readers of the Bible, that the Lord would choose such a man for one of the twelve apostles. But such an one was needed to fulfill the prophecy. Ps. lv. 12-14. For this Judas had been raised up—especially provided, as much as Pharaoh was. Exod. ix. 16.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 1. After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Jewry is another name for Judea. Although the Lord had all power to defend and preserve himself, he would not neglect the proper and common way of doing it; as he did not turn stones to bread when he was hungry, nor cast himself from the top of the temple on to the pavement below, as Satan wanted him to. Neither did he sustain his body by his Almighty power, as he could have done; but ate and drank like other men, because this course served his purpose best while he lived with men.

7. The world can not hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

Often a thing is denied by way of diminishing it, as a thing is said to have had no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. 1 Cor. i. 28. 2 Cor. iii. 10. 2 Sam. xiv. 11. Gen. xxi. 29. Luke xiv. 26

The world could not hate them for the same cause and to the same amount that it did him, because they were not as holy as he was. But they hated them less. Matt. x. 22. It only shows their hatred to be less toward them.

17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

A willing heart, a candid mind, has much influence in our receiving truth. The thieves on the cross had heard much about Jesus, as every man had who lived in that region; for the ministry of Christ was not exercised in private, or in a corner, as Paul told Agrippa. Acts xxvi. 26. One of these thieves reviled the suffering Savior, but the other, thinking of the value of his soul and his need of salvation, that he was just entering into eternity, turned to the dying Savior and besought him for that salvation which he only could give him, of which Jesus had given such abundant evidence. And his prayer was answered, and his soul saved. No doubt the Lord bowed his stubborn heart for this purpose. John vi. 65.

39. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

This is a bold figure, as that is which some have perverted to teach transubstantiation, as "This is my body." Matt. xxvi. 26.

53. And every man went unto his own house.

Every man of them who had been in the council deliberating, went to his own home. Not every man in the whole world; but every man of those who were spoken of as holding the council.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Jesus condemned her conduct in saying, Go, and sin no more. But he did not condemn her judicially by stoning her to death. That would have been insurrection against the Roman government; for the Romans held the civil power.

31. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

The evidence that they loved him would be shown if they obeyed his teaching, and lived as he directed. If ye love me keep my commandments. To show love to God, and to honor him is to receive his word as everlasting truth, and truth of infinite value. Not to receive his word is to rebel against him; and not to believe it, is to make him a liar. There is ground for the phrase damnable heresy.

51. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.

His body would die as all must, and as Jesus' body would; but the soul of the true believer would not suffer eternal death.

52. Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil.

If they had loved the Lord as they ought, they would not have caviled thus at his teaching; but would have believed that it was right; and that his words were true in some

sense which they did not understand. Therefore they showed the state of their hearts, and their bitter enmity to him. And he pake in this manner to bring out their enmity. He could as easily have said, Shall not suffer eternal misery. But he wished them to be tried, that they might exhibit their true character.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 3. Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

His being born blind was not occasioned exclusively by his own sins, nor by the sins of his parents; for he was born before he had done any thing either good or bad. Rom. ix. 11. And his parents' sins, although rendering him deserving of that judgment, were not the exclusive motive; else all men would be born blind. The great motive was that God might give that miraculous evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. This may lead to the inquiry whether the principle may not equally apply to all the other cases of miraculous healing performed by him.

"Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents," is to be interpreted as applying to the question, Why this man was born blind? And the Lord said that it was not his sins nor his parents; but also for the occasion that it afforded of showing divine works.

16. Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

Here by their different reasoning, they manifested the different state of their hearts. Those who wanted to disbelieve sought for a pretext to justify their unbelief. Such can always easily find such a pretext. But those who were willing to believe, were also willing to do justice. As such a work was not for worldly profit, nor a worldly business; but purely a work of mercy, restoring sight to a man that had been blind all his life long, it was proper on the Sabbath, as lifting an ox out of a pit into which he had fallen, or put out a fire that threatened to destroy a house. Therefore it furnished no

evidence against Jesus. And then as this miracle required the divine hand to perform it, it was a demonstration that he was from God.

The effort of the Pharisees to counteract the conclusive evidence which this miracle afforded, shows how much it galled and shook their wicked and obstinate unbelief; and showed how unreasonable it was. They could not agree among themselves. No one could show nor suggest any way of avoiding the conviction that Christ was the Son of God as he had professed to be, when he had given power to his disciples to restore to sight one who was born blind. They seem to have been confounded, and broke up in discouragement; and every one of them went home.

27. He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

The word hear is used in two different senses in this verse? In the first place, it signifies the consent of the mind believing; and in the next, hearing with the ears.

41. Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind ye should have no sin.

If their minds were destitute of capacity to understand they would not be accountable: but if they were willfully undeceiving they would be accountable.

But it is common in the scriptures to deny to express diminution. If they had been blind, so that they could not see these miracles, their sin would be less aggravated than it now was.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

Jesus came into the fold of God's sheep by divine authority—God sent him. All the pretended Messiahs that ever appeared before, were false Messiahs—only pretenders. And all that should afterward appear would equally be mere pretenders. There could only be One Son of God—One Savior of sinners.

4. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.

The sheep are his disciples. And by works which they have seen with their eyes, heard with their ears, and felt in their hearts and souls, they know the Shepherd and his voice. The real Christian knows the truth of the gospel of salvation just as well as he wishes to know it. The heresies and false doctrines that are so abundantly taught in the world, and become so popular with carnal men, he knows to be false, by the unctio within him; for it is not possible to deceive the elect.

16. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision. His ministry was generally confined to the Jews, who were what he meant by—this fold. All the pious believing Jews were his sheep. The other sheep which he had, not of this fold, were yet among all the nations of the earth; and were not believers. And yet he had them—he had them by the covenant of redemption, by election. They were really his in prospect: and should certainly come; for them he must bring as well as those Jews who were already believers. And there would be one church and one Redeemer.

18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commaadment have I received of my Father.

He who was the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, had all the power of life and death. All power—men and devils could not take away the life of his human body. And yet the Jews with Pilate did take it away. Acts iii. 15. 1 Thess. ii. 15. Acts x. They took his life away, because he voluntarily yielded himself into their hands that they might do it, and came into this world for this purpose; else they could not have done it, as he said to Pilate, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." John xix. 11. To the same purpose he said to his persecutors, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Luke xxii. 53.

This commandment, or this commission he had received of his Father. It was the purpose and will of God to suffer those wicked men to act out their own free agency, if they chose to

kill the Lord of life and glory ; to kill his human body only ; his soul they did not kill ; his divine nature they did not kill.

26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

For he had just said to them, that his sheep did hear his voice—did believe on him. If a sinner's heart is changed, he is a new creature, and sees divine things in a new light.

30. I and my Father are one.

One in the Godhead. They were one in will, one in power, one in wisdom, one in nature, and one in glory.

39. Therefore they sought again to take him ; but he escaped out of their hand.

They were unable to do any thing to him without his will, as they were to pluck the sun from the heavens ; for they were in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter ; for all power in heaven and in earth was in his hand ; both the life of the body and the life of the soul. Matt. xxviii. 18. John xvii. 2 ; v. 21.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 16. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Thomas knew of the love that flowed between the Lord and this pious family, and in deep sympathy with it expressed the idea of going to them, and even to die with Lazarus. This was the death that was the subject of the conversation, and this is the necessary construction ; for it is written, "For a good man some would even dare to die." Rom. v. 7.

47. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we ? for this man doeth many miracles.

Although there was only one who held the office of chief priest, yet there was his predecessor in that office, who by courtesy was still called chief priest, and it seems was also allowed to act officially in it. And there were other priests, who were eminent and influential men, who were called chief priests, meaning leading men.

If we can know them by their fruits, we can know that the men of this council were uncandid, dishonest men ; for when they saw and knew that Jesus did many miracles that were of such an unquestionable character, they ought to have believed on him as their candid and honest neighbors did. That Jesus was the Son of God was shown to a certainty by many infallible proofs Acts i. 3. The men of this council felt and knew that these numerous and unquestionable miracles were infallible proofs—conclusive evidences of Christ's divine commission. Although they were thus convinced, they would not yield to what they so much hated as they did Christ and his gospel. Their wicked and obstinate hearts controlled their conduct, for sin makes fools of its votaries. Look at Elymas. Acts xiii. 8. What did he know about truth when he tried to hinder the deputy, a prudent man, from believing the gospel ? But in a few minutes he was made to know, when he was struck with blindness, and went about seeking some one to lead him by the hand.

The unbelief of these chief men was from timidity with some who wished to be popular with their party. John xii. 42. But the truth was perfectly plain and evident to those who were candid and willing to receive it. And so it is now. If some suffer their unbelief to prevent them from receiving the gospel of life and salvation, they must take the consequences. They will soon see their folly, as Elymas did.

49. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all.

He told them their folly and ignorance, as is above shown. And they ought to have taken the counsel of so eminent a man of their own party. But as Satan hates truth and the kingdom only from an evil heart, so do his children among men. He knows what is true ; but he hates it and opposes it. Matt. iv. 3. Mark i. 24. If devils confessed that Jesus was the Holy One of God, sinners should not do less, and be worse than they when he came to save their poor souls. Mark xii. 10, 11.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

This was their own whispering—their private talk among themselves. They saw and knew that the great mass of the people were fully convinced of Jesus' divine character. The raising of Lazarus up from the grave, where he had lain four days, was conclusive. There could be no collusion in that case. Many came to Bethany anxious to see Lazarus, who had been raised to life after he had lain four days in the grave. And the prejudiced persecutors consulted to put Lazarus to death, also, for his resurrection made many converts.

25. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

He that loved his life in this world less than he loved divine things should be saved. Hate is sometimes used to mean love less. Luke xiv. 26. To be a Christian is to take up the cross, deny ourselves, and love God above all things.

27. Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour.

He could not ask the Father to save him from the agonies of crucifixion, when he had come into the world for the purpose of enduring those dreadful sufferings. When he asks whether he shall say, "Father, save me from this dreadful hour," his answer is, "No," because that was what he came for.

28. Father, glorify thy name.

This shows a complete surrender of his will and his interests into the hands of the Father; the greatest and the highest evidence of love and devotion to God that any man on earth or any angel in heaven can give, and shows that piety in the children of God is an entire and unqualified surrender of their will to God's will. In all our prayers it teaches us to say, not my will but thine be done.

31. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

Now is approaching the trying hour of this world, which will show how they treat their Creator, the Lord of life and glory, who came to bless and to save sinners. If they reject him, and crucify him, the shame and condemnation of this wicked world will be sealed forever.

The prince of this world, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, shall be cast out. His own abandoned wickedness shall give the death-blow to all his hopes and designs, causing him to be shut in the pit. Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3.

32. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

Lifted on the cross, will draw all men unto me. All nations, Gentiles as well as Jews, for although the Gentiles were not seeking this privilege, yet as the riches of the gospel are bestowed of grace, the treasures of gospel dispensation were to be opened to them in fulfillment of the prophecy, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not." Rom. x. 20; ix. 30, 31. Was made manifest, meaning, I will be made manifest. The past is put for the future, which is common in prophecies. Saul of Tarsus was not asking nor seeking, when Jesus appeared to him near Damascus. But this may not be used against seeking. Deut. iv. 29; xii. 5. Luke xiii. 24. Isa. xlv. 19; lv. 6.

39, 40. Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias [Isaiah] said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart.

God, the Wise Sovereign and the Righteous Judge, does give up some wicked men to hardness of heart and to blindness of mind, we know; for it is plainly revealed. Exod. iv. 21. Josh. xi. 20. Who can be ignorant of what is so plainly revealed? Surely, none but unbelievers.

All the children of men are lost sinners, and dead in trespasses and sins, and condemned already. John iii. 18. None can escape from this condition except those whom Christ redeems and takes out of it. He both redeems them by his sacrifice on the cross; and then takes them out by grace of the Holy Spirit, for after he died and rose again, and had paid the debt of sinners to redeem them, they are not actually saved nor delivered until they have repented, and have become believers. All their guilt, condemnation, and helplessness remain upon them; they remain dead in trespasses and sins, under the wrath and curse of God.

But as Jesus has purchased their redemption, he will accom-

plish it by regenerating them, and begetting them to repentance and faith and love. This regeneration is a work which man nor angel never did do, nor can do. It is a work of Omnipotence alone. Eph. i. 19, 20; ii. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Luke xviii. 13; xiii. 24. John vi. 65.

How God hardens and blinds sinners needs no inquiry, for all sinners are lost, hardened and totally destitute of any holiness or piety until God works in them. They only need to be let alone, left where they are, and grace withheld, and then they must remain only in their depraved and vile condition.

God did give up Job, in a measure, into the hands of Satan. He did let Satan enter into Judas. He did send an evil spirit from the Lord into King Saul. 1 Sam. xvi. 14. 1 Kings xxii. 23. Thus we can see how men can be hardened and their depravity aggravated. But we do not see the need of this addition; for if the Holy Jehovah withholds sanctifying and restraining grace, we need nothing more to show us their entire helplessness. God does restrain ungodly men. Gen. xx. 6. Exod. xxxiv. 24. Gen. xxxv. 5. Prov. xvi. 7. How plainly, then, is the truth of other scriptures seen. Jer. xviii. 6. Rom. ix. 13-18.

42. Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

Men of all ranks believed then as now; and some from one motive and some from another are prevented from confessing him. In fact it may be that two-thirds of society believe that the gospel is true.

44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

Hundreds of passages seem only to suggest subjects and leave it to the candid reader to learn their meaning by reason and common sense. To believe on Christ was to believe on him; how, then, could it be said that such as believed on him did not believe on him? As there are three persons in the Godhead to believe on, One only would be the faith of an unbeliever in the greater part of the truth. It was indispensable to gospel faith that he who had it believe also in the Father as well as in the Son. We then supply the word only, believeth not on me only, but also on the Father which sent me. This supplement renders many passages plain. Jer. vii.

22. Psalms xl. 6. John xii. 44; vi. 27; ix. 3. Rom. ii. 28. 1 Cor. x. 24. 2 Cor. vii. 7. Gal. iv. 7. 1 Tim. v. 23. 2 Cor. vii. 12. Philemon 16. Deut. xix. 15. He that findeth his life in this world only. Matt. x. 39. John xiv. 24. So, then, neither is he that planteth nor watereth any thing only an instrument. Phil. ii. 21; iv. 6. 1 Tim. v. 23. Drink not water only. Thus we have to dig and search for truth as we do for gold. Gal. iv. 7, 29.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 1. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in this world, he loved them unto the end.

He loved them unto everlasting without end. Never did one of his fall and perish; for he is a faithful Father, and will keep and take care of his children. Chap. xvii. 12. Judas was not one of them only by profession. John vi. 70; xii. 6. He was the son of perdition. Acts i. 25.

2. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.

If it had not been that God permitted this, it could not have been done. Devils could not enter the herd of swine without permission, nor afflict Job, nor deceive Ahab.

3. Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.

It was evidently by a divine arrangement between the Persons of the Trinity that all things were given into the hands of the Son; as other works were conceded to the other Persons of the Godhead; as sending the Son and assigning him his work in redeeming souls and establishing the gospel dispensation, and assigning to the Spirit the work of inspiration, the work of sanctifying and comforting God's people. Hence the terms Father, Redeemer and Comforter are appropriated. Yet each person of the Godhead may be rightly said to act in

all these departments ; for neither acts alone and without the others ; for all concur and conjoin in all their works. Although God created all things, he created them by Jesus Christ. Heb. i. 2. Col. i. John xv. 26 ; xvi. 7. Gen. i. 2. This convention or agreement is shown. John v. 22 ; xiv. 10.

15. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

This was not an ordinance, a sacrament, but an example for them to pattern after, in doing any kind office to the brethren that they may need.

20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me ; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Let us take notice of this lesson, and remember it, lest we be found transgressors.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 11. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me : or else believe me for the very works' sake.

This agrees with John x. 30. If we remember that Jehovah is infinite and incomprehensible, we shall fully believe this scripture, although we can not explain the Trinity and unity of God.

12. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto my Father.

Not every one that believeth on him shall do those miracles ; but the disciples having the inspiration of the Holy Spirit should do such miracles, and so long as that age of miracles should last.

13. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

As He is the mediator between God and man, no man can approach the Infinite and Holy One, but through him. John

xiv. 6. Some pray without mention of Christ, or his name. Some because they are not Christians, and their hearts are ignorant of the gospel, and some because they do not know the divine plan of salvation. But their prayers have no answer.

15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

If we have grateful love to the Lord for his work of redeeming love, his work of infinite love, saving us from sin and death, we can never forget to love him in return. We shall prove our love and let our light shine by believing his word; for not believing it is to make him a liar. 1 John v. 19. The Christian does not believe in election, predestination, decrees and final perseverance of the saints in order to be saved; but because he loves to honor, to serve and to glorify God. Neither does he turn from evil, and walk with God in order to be saved; for Christ is all his righteousness; but he does all his works from love to God.

21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

No other one loves him. For he said, He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings. Some of those who love not, do not regard what the Lord said of his equality with God; do not love what he said of election; some disregard what he said about the official equality of gospel ministers; some disregard the Sabbath; some disregard the kind caution that now is the accepted time; and others refuse the caution, He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. But every man has his own way of showing his character; for by their fruits Christians will know them. And for this it is necessary for them to show their hearts so as to be known.

28. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

I go away, can only relate to manifestation, for, as he is God, he is always present in heaven and in all other places; he was in heaven when he was here. John iii. 13. My Father is greater than I. The conventional appropriation of position and work between the persons of the Godhead accounts for

this superiority which is everywhere assigned to the Father; for as God they were the same in substance and equal in power and glory. Ministers who call the Son equal with the Father, dispute revelation. When speaking on this point, they should call the Son equal with God, because he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Phil. ii. 6. In the Godhead the three Divine persons are equal. But in the work of redemption, if it seemed good, different positions could be assigned to each to manifest the glory of harmony, that angels might admire the wisdom and humility that are displayed therein; verse 31 and chap. xv. 10.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.

We love God because he first loved us. If he had not begun the work of our redemption, it had never been begun. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. This was before the world was; for it was then that he chose us and set his love upon us. We were not first in it, he was first. If any poor sinner now chooses Christ as his Savior and portion, it is because God has chosen him and made him willing in the day of his power. Ps. cx. 3. And God ought to have the glory. The belief that we form on this subject is very important; it is a turning point in our character, and proves whether we give the glory of our piety to God, or rob him of it, and give it to the sinner. We love to sing,

'Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly drew us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.

22. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin.

If they would not have had sin, then he need not have spoken to them. Therefore it is obvious that denial in scripture is used for mitigation. They had not had sin to so great

a degree. We learn then that all our blessings, mercies and favors, if unimproved, increase and aggravate our condemnation.

23. He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

Unitarians then who show their hatred of the Son by rejecting him in his divine character, show equally their hatred to God the Father, which fixes and seals their doom.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

The Jewish Church, the Church of God, would thus persecute and excommunicate those for their piety and faith, and do it under pretense of piety. Acts xxvi. 9.

7. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away.

One event is made dependent on another, and each one can come only in its order.

9. Of sin, because they believe not on me.

Not to believe on the Son of God in his true and divine character, as the mighty God, the everlasting Father, equal with God, and honor him even as they honor the Father, will be condemned as unbelievers. Isa. ix. 6. John v. 23; xvi. 9.

10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.

That is in this world after the ascension.

15. All things that the Father hath are mine.

The universe is his; for he created it. Angels are his; for he created them. John i. 3. He had glory with the Father before the world was. John xvii. 5.

24. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.

It is a peculiarity of the gospel dispensation that worshipers approach the throne, through the Mediator, asking in reliance

upon his righteousness and intercession. This shows that the Lord's Prayer was not made for this dispensation, but was good in the former.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 6. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.

To manifest God's name was to show all about him pertaining to salvation, and to reveal it to them, internally working it into their hearts and souls by his Holy Spirit. This work was wrought in those that the Father had given to the Son out of the world, and to no more. He could not give it to any more; for he had no authority. It would be rebellion and disobedience to attempt to go beyond his commission; for he was an obedient Son, doing only the will of his Father. And our highest attainment in piety is like submission to God—willingness that his will be done, saying with him, Father, not my will, but thine be done.

This is what is taught us. "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark x. 15.

Now all sinners are to rejoice in this gracious provision of salvation for some, and for as many as are given to the Son in the eternal covenant of redemption. As the elect do not know who they are, they have no more ground to rejoice, and strive to enter in, than the non-elect. All stand an equal ground in this respect. These are the very terms and conditions and limitations in which it comes to them. Now who among all the sinning world will rejoice to accept it and come? The rest must perish justly forever.

9. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

That the Son did not rebel against the will of the Father is here shown. He did not pray for all the world of sinners, nor for any more than were given him in the covenant of redemption made in eternity before the world was. As many were embraced in that covenant as could be consistently with infinite wisdom and goodness of the Trinity. It was not good that any of the fallen angels should be included in it, nor for any men who commit the unpardonable sin, nor for any other

sinner whom the Trinity did not see good to include in it. John xviii. 11.

Now the question arises, if God sees it not good to save fallen angels, nor fallen men, who have committed the unpardonable sin, nor all the wicked of our race, will we quarrel with him for what his infinite wisdom and goodness lead him to do? Will we find fault with him because he is infinitely wise and good? If so, we show that we richly deserve to be among those not given to the Son.

If we cordially acquiesce in the divine sovereignty, wisdom and goodness and come to the mercy seat, as the leper came to Jesus saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean? he will answer, I will, be thou clean.

These very truths are revealed to the world to show the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, that all who hear may have the opportunity of understanding and acquiescing in God's divine sovereignty.

17. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

If poor blinded sinners knew the preciousness and value of truth, they would be searching and striving after it, and sitting gladly at the feet of any one who could give it to them, as the eloquent and noble minded Apollos sat at the feet of Aquila and Priscilla, to learn gospel truth, although he was an eloquent preacher, and they were private members. Acts xviii. 24-26.

If this wisdom and inquiry after truth were prevalent in society, there would not be a hundred sects jarring and contending about things which they understand not.

Errorists, fanatics, and heretics are commonly more confident and more firmly set in their errors than Christians are in the truth. And this when the truth might be easily shown them. Prov. xiv. 12. Acts xvii. 11. John vii. 17. Men do not seem to care if they are holding soul-destroying heresy, but rush on and die in their delusion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 9. That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Attention is called to this verse to show that the true interpretation of verse 12 is, that I have lost none. But the son of perdition is lost who was not one of them.

20. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world * * * and in secret have I said nothing.

Nothing different; nothing that concerns this trial or my character.

36. Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.

The disciples could partake with actual government of the Romans over the Jewish country, without offending against any thing that Jesus taught.

37. Thou sayest that I am a king.

The translators can hardly be excused for such errors. They ought to have said, Thou sayest what I am, *i. e.*, a king.

He was born to be king of a spiritual kingdom. Luke xvii. 21.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 11. Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

This was their hour, and the power of darkness. Pilate and all his hosts of persecutors were in the hands of Jesus to destroy them if he would, to hinder or prevent any of their measures. But how, then, should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? Matt. xxvi. 54.

Pilate had not apprehended Jesus, nor sought him, nor been in any way officious in his persecution. But the high priest had, with Caiaphas, delivered him to Pilate, and thus were guilty of the greater sin. Num. xxxv. 20-25. Deut. xix. 11, 12.

23. Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts.

This was such an exact and circumstantial fulfillment of prophecy, that ignorant infidels have said that the predictions have been interpolated since the events, which would be utterly impossible, since copies of the scriptures in different languages, with the Septuagint, are known to have been so universally disseminated over the whole civilized world, as to render this interpolation impossible. Some copies might have been altered, but it would appear on the face of them. If copies were falsely copied, a hundred manuscripts would betray the fraud. Ps. xxii. 16, 18. Also compare Ps. xxii. 1, with Matt. xxvii. 46; and Zech. xii. 10, with John xix. 34. With such evidences unbelief is impossible, unless it be obstinate and gratuitous. See also Ps. lxix. 4, 21. Isa. vii. 14; liii. 3, 4, 5.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

It is remarkable that they should be so dull of apprehension as not to know what was so frequently told them by the Lord, and what was also revealed in the Old Testament. But they were not yet inspired with the spirit of prophecy. Ps. xvi. 9, 10. Acts xiii. 35, 36.

23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.

Revelation is so given that men must study, search, and dig for it, as they dig for gold, and cultivate the earth for bread. Neither gold nor bread lies in heaps upon the surface; we have to dig for them. So if we examine we shall easily know what is meant by the apostles remitting sin, for they never attempted to do it authoritatively and actually, but only ministerially, by preaching that remission will be to the penitent, and sin will be retained upon the impenitent. And as this only was their practice, therefore we can know that this was what they understood this remission to mean. Those who have pardoned sins for money in thousands of instances, and then denied it because the Reformation of A. D. 1517, frightened them, who had penetrated deeply into corruption, betraying souls to death, and

then denying it when Protestant light shone upon them, forgetting that all liars shall have their part. Rev. xxi. 8.

The meaning of David is learned with certainty by Solomon's conduct. 1 Kings ii. 9, compared with verse 36. We know that Solomon understood that he must not bring down Shimei's hoary head to the grave for that offense which David had pardoned.

In like manner we learn many things with certainty from the practice of the apostles, for they were inspired prophets. Inspiration was given them on purpose, that they might know their work in setting up the gospel dispensation. John xiv. 26.

If the apostles and elders at Jerusalem were taught of God, and yet did not know any thing about popes and diocesans, then we know that they are corruptions.

30. And many other signs truly did Jesus.

As many were written as were deemed sufficient to satisfy every candid inquirer; where these are not sufficient more would not be.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSE 22. Jesus saith unto him. If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

If he tarry till I come, not die as martyr, but live till I come in the course of nature, that he may die as a natural death.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 2. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

After the Lord had risen from the dead he commanded his disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The three persons in the Godhead seem to be equal, as God, in power and glory. This is the first time that the sacrament of water baptism is ever named in the scriptures. It was referred to or hinted, Isa. lii. 15, Ezek. xxxvi. 25; but in the New Testament it is never even hinted or referred to until now.

It will be difficult for us to assign the reason why it is said, through the Holy Ghost. The author of the comments can only confess incapacity for such passages as Gen. i. 2. Matt. iv. 1; xii. 28. Mark i. 12. Luke iv. 14. John vi. 63. 2 Cor. iii. 17. But many other passages are plain, as John iii. 5. Gal. iv. 29.

5. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

They were not yet inspired with the Spirit of prophecy, which was poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost.

It is cause for deep regret that any evangelical denomination of Christians should have taught that the word baptize means to immerse, when every one knows that as the Spirit is poured out upon the disciples there can be no immersion in baptizing with the Spirit. Acts ii. 3, 17, 18, 33.

10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel.

Although they were angels from heaven, they were called men, because they had the appearance of men. The scripture is justified in calling things by the name of what they appear

to be. Gen. xviii. 1. Josh. x. 13. Judges xiii. 6, 10. More easily understood, Josh. x. 12.

18. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

This is told before, and is here again alluded to, with the addition that when he was cut down he fell headlong, and his bowels gushed out. How he purchased the said field was shown before. He threw down the money in the temple. Matt. xxvii. 5, 6, 7. Judas is said to have purchased a field, because the money came by his means that it was purchased with.

It does not appear that the promise that they would be endowed with power from on high was realized to them when they went to fill the place of Judas; for it was during the days of their prayer-meeting preceding the day of Pentecost. And why they went about this important work, and did not tarry until they were endowed with power from on high, according to verse 4, we are not informed. Perhaps they were too soon in filling the apostolic college, and perhaps Paul is the twelfth apostle.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?

And in the next verse he is called God.

12. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.

The Lord wrought many miracles among the people when he was with them, and when he departed he endowed his disciples with the same power, that the people might understand that he was still present with them. This was love and kindness to the world in giving them such a continuation of the evidence. Acts v. 15, 16.

24. Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

They seem to have been discouraged in making opposition

to the gospel. The evidence attending it was so conclusive, so overwhelming, that everybody but themselves could see that it was true. Depravity is so deep and obstinate in some wicked men that the clearest evidence has no power with them.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 3. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

Where was the pope? Where was the bishop? The power was in the hands of the apostles and elders. They knew of no pope, no bishop. The presbytery or assembly of ministers and elders had the power. If they did not know of the pope and the bishop, then the Lord had appointed none; and as they were inspired to know their duty, they did know it, and so do we know. These seven men were not permanent officers of the church. They were appointed in that emergency only as temporary trustees of the charitable funds of the church, when excessive charity made them sell their houses and lands and give all the proceeds to the apostles for a common charity. When any one of them died a martyr as Stephen did, they did not fill his place by appointing another in his room.

As they were men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, they were competent to exhort and pray in public, as occasion might require

But their office to which they were ordained was a secular ecclesiastical one, and one beneath the ministerial office. This is clear, because the work to which they were ordained was one inconsistent with the high and sacred character of the ministry. These seven men by their office had to serve out provisions for the poor and widows—an office vastly inferior to the ministry. This was the business to which they were appointed and ordained, the only business.

If Stephen and Philip at Samaria did other work, as it seems they did, for Philip administered baptism, it was not by virtue of this office. It was by being full of the Holy Ghost, or by indulgence of zealous men in public exercises without authority, as Apollos preached without authority. Acts xviii. 24, 25; viii. 4. Jer. xxiii. 21, 22. And Stephen, Acts vi. 5, before his ordination.

8. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Stephen had these endowments while he was only a layman, a private member, as all the seven were, and they were appointed to their office because they were laymen. If they wrought miracles and spake as prophets publicly, it was no more than was to be expected and indulged in all ages of the church. Stephen did not wait for this ordination before he began to do these great wonders and miracles among the people. He did them before he was ordained, and independent of it; his faith, and having the Holy Spirit, were a sufficient warrant. Even Balaam and King Saul, wicked men, had to prophesy under inspiration. Num. xxiii. 4, 5. 1 Sam. x. 10.

It does not appear that these seven trustees had any other office, or any other ordination, neither did they need any other. For if they were prophets and full of the Holy Ghost, what more could they want? Jer. xxiii. 21, 22. They must have had the highest qualification. What need had they of the lower?

For any thing that appears, evangelist was a work to which a man was devoted rather than an office to which he was ordained. The apostles and ministers were all evangelists. Philip at Samaria preached the gospel, organized the church, baptized, wrought miracles, and did the work of an evangelist, and yet Peter and John were sent there to do more than he could do. Acts viii. 14, 15, 16.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 3. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church.

Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle, was a cruel and bitter persecutor. He was a Jew, one of the professing people of God. He assisted at the martyrdom of Stephen, that holy man. Nothing but his malignant depravity could excite this malevolence to these pious and godly men. What had he against them?

4. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Evangelizing the word as it is in the original. Many of them probably were not ministers. But they loved the gospel and would declare it.

20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

What a picture of popery does this present! It has deceived and betrayed millions of poor sinners into the belief of the corrupt and soul-destroying thought, that sins could be pardoned by it for money. And it professes to be the Church of God and infallible, while this bold presumptuous error lies against it, and hangs like a millstone about its neck to sink its believers to destruction. Nothing is too bad for the wicked to profess or to do.

38. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

It is not said which administered the sacrament of baptism to the other. It was not necessary; for every reader knows that it was Philip.

Although that point is clear enough, yet it is not shown how the baptism was administered. This must be learned elsewhere, for the word baptize does not show the mode.

The translators were heedless and culpably negligent in rendering the preposition *eis* by the preposition *into* before water; for this rendering is not correct, and doubtless has had great influence in deceiving the public. The rendering should have been, They went down to the water. In John xx. 4, where it is said, That the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the sepulcher, the language is similar, *eis to mnemeion*. Yet it is expressly added that he entered not in. If he came first to the sepulcher, and yet entered not into it, then we know, on divine authority, that *eis* does not mean into. This the translators should have known and thus avoided the error. Besides, no one knows whether the water was two inches deep or four, or whether it was more than a small spring, or a rivulet, and insufficient for immersion.

A similar use of the preposition *eis* before the noun *ship*, they rendered to the ship, Acts xxi. 38, as they did John xx. 4.

They made a similar mistake in rendering *ek* by, out of, in the next verse. And they say out of the water, when they should have said, And when they ascended from the water. For in Greenleaf's Greek Lexicon, the first definition of *ek* is from. In the fortieth verse they render *eis* to before Cæsarea, it therefore means to, else they translate it incorrectly. Acts viii. 40.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 3. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven.

Saul was not seeking light nor truth; he was obstinately pursuing his course of hating the light and rejecting the truth; the mercy and grace and kindness of God in Christ came upon him to call him to salvation. This light was so unaccountable and so sudden and unexpected, that he and all his attendants fell to the earth.

Then Jesus called to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Mercy had not forgotten him nor forsaken him. Surely then the mercy of God must be infinite to come showering from heaven upon such a sinner, such a bloody persecutor.

Surely we ought to have higher and more exalted views of that divine goodness and mercy that brings us salvation. It is not in all cases that salvation is obtained without seeking. But this instance is given to show the free grace that is in it. Isa. lv. 6; lxv. 1. Jer. xxix. 13. Luke xiii. 24. 1 Tim. i. 16.

This passage also shows that salvation is of the Lord. Jonah ii. 9. John vi. 65; xv. 5.

If men are called upon to repent and turn to God, to be holy, to believe in Christ, and to be devoted to God, it is because these are duties binding on every sinner; he must do them or sin; he must do them, or be a rebel against God. These duties are not required because he has power to do them, nor because his efforts will be of any avail; for they will not unless the almighty power and the infinite grace of God make them so. But they are required of every sinner, because it is his duty to do them, and to be as holy as the angels in heaven; complete holiness is the duty of every fallen creature, whether man or angel. The fall is no excuse. It does not justify one. God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Acts xvii. 30. If Christ had not died, and if there had been no salvation, it would have been the duty of all fallen men and fallen angels to repent and turn to holiness and to God; for sin can never be right. Be ye holy; for I am holy. This is the ground. Lev. xix. 2. No doubt blinded and ignorant sinners would bargain with God, and would do so and so if he would save them. But God will not be nired—will not sell the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. God commands us all to be holy, because he is so.

He who would bargain with him, and make conditions with him, is in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. The Christian serves God because he loves him, and not for salvation. All his good works are unworthy of salvation. Nothing but Christ accomplishes that, and he must have all the glory of it.

7. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

These men who were traveling with Saul were his attendants, employes. Stood speechless, should have been rendered, remained speechless; for they had fallen to the earth. Acts xxvi. 14. They heard the voice of Him that spake to Saul, but they did not see him who spake, nor understand the words; for as the words were spoken in Hebrew, these illiterate men who understood only the Greek did not understand them. They saw no man, is to be understood as applying only to the cause of the voice; for they saw their company. What is meant is not always said, but left for interpretation.

23. And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.

But this they could not do, for although they were free agents, they could not accomplish all their purposes; none but Omnipotence can do that. Acts xxiii. 21; xxvi. 17. James iv. 15.

CHAPTER X.

5. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter.

The angel could have told him the things he need to know. But in the divine economy, a minister of the gospel must do it; to them the work of preaching the gospel had been assigned. They must have the pleasure of doing the work.

Cornelius knew the truth; for an angel of God had told him. And Peter knew the truth; for he had visions and revelations from God. How kind was God to thus give them to know about divine things! Acts x. 33.

45. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because

that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The baptism of the Spirit, then, was not by immersion, but by pouring down upon them.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 4. And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

This feast called Easter was the Jewish passover, called Pascha, in the original, and should not have been called Easter, giving countenance to the superstitions of the man of sin.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 8. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Why did he wish to prevent the deputy, or any poor sinner, from receiving the gospel of salvation? What did he know against it? Like other unbelievers, he knew nothing. Their opposition is all ignorance and unbelief. But he soon began to know. When he was smitten with blindness, and sought for some one to lead him by the hand, he then knew. So all unbelievers will know; for the day is coming when the light of truth will burst upon them. But it may be when it is too late.

34. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

The sure mercies of David were not like those of Saul, which were taken away, for the mercies of David were to continue to his house forever. They are being fulfilled to-day, as Christ, his Son, is occupying his throne. 1 Sam. xv. 11. 2 Sam. vii. 15, 16. 2 Kings viii. 19. 2 Sam. vii. 13-16.

48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Ps. iii. 8; xxxvii. 39. John vi. 65; xv. 5; xvii. 2. Ps. xxxvii. 39; cx. 3.

As salvation is of grace—is a free gift of grace to the unworthy, and is by the power of the Divine Spirit, there is nothing startling nor paradoxical in this passage; every word of it is analogical and orthodox. Rom. viii. 28-30.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 14. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out.

The honesty, fidelity, and purity of these ministers of the gospel appears with illustrious brightness in this refusal of honors that were due only to God.

22. Confirming the souls of the disciples.

This was by exhorting and encouraging to constancy, perseverance, and steadfastness, in the duties of practical piety. It was not an ordinance, nor a sacrament, nor even a ceremony; it was an exhortation only.

Those who teach the observance of Easter, Christmas, Ascension, and other days of observance in the church, which the Lord hath not taught, show that they teach another gospel, and will get their reward. Gal. iv. 10, 11. Acts xv. 24. Gal. i. 8, 9.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 1. And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye can not be saved.

They were not authorized to teach this necessity of circumcision. Why did not they wait for instructions? To teach what God has not authorized is to teach a false and corrupt doctrine, and bring guilt upon their own heads.

2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

This was right; for when we have any doubt about doctrine or duty, we ought not to remain in doubt, but take effectual measures to get right. This measure was the effectual one, for the apostles of Jerusalem knew what the Lord had taught on this and on all other subjects.

And when the brethren came together at Jerusalem, they soon settled the question, and affirmed that they gave no such commandment. This was conclusive; for what they were not inspired to teach was only false and corrupt teaching—was not from God. What weak fanatics taught about Christmas and Easter, bishops and popes, which God had not taught, was only false doctrine, another gospel, and would bring upon them who taught it the curse that is written. Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32, Jer. xxiii. 21–28. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Heretics who disregard the real nature of the gospel are not imbued with evangelical religion (have not the kingdom of God within them—Luke xvii. 21) want a substitute for it; something in the room of it to amuse, divert and take up the attention of their members, that they may feel satisfied with their teachers while they are zealously pursuing a false religion. Hence the zeal for rituals, and any thing that is really worthless.

6. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

The gospel was a positive institution. It was no imaginary or conjectural matter. Men might not teach any thing they liked, but what God commanded. What they could not show a “thus saith the Lord” for, was of no account, but was heresy and corruption. So truth may be easily known. Isa. viii. 20. And the friends of truth may be known.

24. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment.

This settled the question. If the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, who had committed to them the work of organizing

the church under the gospel dispensation, and had all instruction needed. John xiv. 26. Now, where is the command to appoint a pope? or a diocesan? or to immerse in baptism? or make a ceremony of confirmation? If impudent men, who make scripture for themselves, or wrest those which God has made, have to give account for their presumption, then many Pharisees will be sadly disappointed at last. Matt. vii. 23.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 2. Which was well reported of.

Timothy was well reported of.

3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

By traveling with the apostle, Timothy could study with him.

7. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Why they were not allowed to go into Babylon we are not informed. The Lord in a similar manner instructed the twelve on a certain mission not to enter any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Matt. x. 5. The Lord knows who are his, and whom his grace is designed for. But as we do not know, we are all alike bound to use all the means with all diligence. Eccl. xi. 6. No man can foresee how his race or his enterprise will result, therefore he makes the greater exertion. If he will not do so in spiritual things he proves his hypocrisy.

14. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

If the Spirit had not thus opened her heart, it would have remained shut against Christ, agreeing with Acts xiii. 48.

19. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and threw them into the market-place unto the rulers.

This snows these persecutors to disadvantage—placing them in a dilemma. If the apostle had not done this miracle, then he had not injured her masters, and they had nothing to complain of. If he had done it, it showed the power of God, and claimed their respect. But we need not look for reason or good sense from wicked men.

25, 26. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake.

Another astounding miracle. Surely these wicked men could see and know that they were fighting against God, and could not succeed, but must fall in the end.

31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

The gracious promise of God includes a believer's house or family of children. The promise was to Abraham. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Gen. xvii. 7. This covenant God keeps and fulfills. Abraham was to put the seal of circumcision upon his children and upon his servants, and this secured the covenant and its blessings upon both him, his children, and his servants, as we put the seal of baptism upon our households.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Men are not required to believe without evidence. God has by miracles and fulfilled prophecies given abundance of evidence of the truth of revelation, so that the searcher after truth may know with absolute certainty the truth of his revelation. The scriptures they searched were those of the Old Testament. The New Testament was not yet written.

23. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions,

I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

As wicked men do not wish nor intend to do right, they willingly follow unknown gods as papists set up images or idols; for they have no fear of gods which they have made themselves from wood, silver, gold or from the consecrated wafer. Such gods they are fond of; for they are not worthy of any fear or reverence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 10. For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Much people, many elected to become believers. This promise of protection was a great comfort and support to the apostle in his Christian warfare among his violent persecutors. Such a promise was given to the prophet Jeremiah, chap. i. 8.

24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

Apollos was not taught in the gospel. He was ignorant of it, knowing only what John the Baptist had taught. It seems mysterious that this public preacher, not ordained, but a self-devoted voluntary preacher, should have remained in that region twenty-three years after the resurrection of Christ without learning any thing of Christ beyond what John the Baptist had taught. But as a believing Jew he could be a godly man. He seems to have been an acceptable preacher among the Christian brethren; for Aquila and Priscilla who had been with Paul, on finding Apollos, had instructed him in the gospel, which instruction he willingly received; for he was open to conviction, and willing to receive truth from any quarter. Although he was not an authorized preacher of the gospel, yet his labors were blessed, because he was sincere in advocating the truth, according to Jeremiah xxiii. 21, 22. It also agrees with what the Lord said to his disciples. Mark 38. 39, 40.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSE 2. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

These disciples seem to have been like Apollos, not initiated fully into the gospel scheme. They had received John's baptism, which bound them to receive and believe on Christ when opportunity offered. But they had not heard of the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and on other occasions. As receiving John's baptism did not make them disciples of Christ, it being unto repentance, and only preliminary, and not a gospel ordinance, not being in the name of the Trinity, it was of no account; and therefore the apostle baptized them with gospel baptism, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This is called baptizing them in the name of the Lord Jesus, or by the authority of the Lord Jesus, giving them that baptism which he commanded. Matt. xxviii. 19.

13. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

The evil spirits did not know the commission of these seven, did not acknowledge it, nor regard it. They only got shame and disgrace by meddling with things about which they were, ignorant. The inspired teachers knew their office and performed it.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSE 17. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Ephesus lay on the east side of the Ægean Sea, about eighteen miles north of Miletus. Paul had determined to pass by it without stopping on his way down to Miletus. As he wished to see the ministers, or the preaching elders of Ephesus, he sent for them to come to him. And they came. As here were a number of these ministerial brethren there, and

as the apostle sends for them only, and says nothing about any diocesan or bishop over them, they had none.

28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Much instruction lies before us in this passage. These elders, ministers or presbyters had the care and government of the church committed to them by the Holy Ghost. This presbyterial government then was of divine authority. The language of the apostle is, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *Episcopous*, bishops. If the translators had been faithful they would have said, made you bishops; then common readers would have understood, that the government of the church was committed to the presbytery, and not to a higher order of bishops over them.

Then as the church of God was purchased with his own blood, then by divine authority we know that the blood of Christ was that blood: the body of Christ was the body of God, was the human nature joined to the divine in one person.

CHAPTER XXII.

VERSE 9. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

They did not understand the words, for they were spoken in Hebrew, and their language was the Greek. The original, *akouo*, signifies to understand, to receive, consent to, as well as to hear with the ear. John ix. 27.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VERSE 12. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

Now we have God's word on one side to deliver Paul, and

the Jews' oath on the other to destroy him. But the Lord's word prevailed, and they were ashamed. Such events make some men question whether man is a free agent. If free agency requires that man can do whatever he will, then he is not a free agent. But it does not concede power to the creature to do all his will; this is the divine prerogative only. Men who contend in races, trials of strength, and at games, can not all win; it would be against nature. They can not do all they will.

CHAPTER XXVI.

VERSE 26. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

The history and life of Christ, and the miracles attending the introduction of the gospel dispensation, were of such a nature, and of such public interest, and of such publicity, and so connected with the civil government, that they had to be known. Men of intelligence and conversant with public affairs could not be ignorant of them. Both Festus and Agrippa did know about them, and felt their credibility. Their consciences were on the side of the gospel, but their hearts, like the hearts of all sinners, were against it, were enmity against God; not subject to the law of God, neither can be, till God by his omnipotent power breaks that enmity and converts it to willingness.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 3. Concerning his son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.

Jesus Christ was a descendant of David, as had been foretold by the prophets. And he was the Son of God. It is not easy to tell why this appellation should be given to one person of the Godhead; for it can not refer to propagation, derivation, emanation, nor to any thing that infers change in his essence or being, because he is without variableness or shadow of change in his essential being. A change is consistent in his being united to human nature to constitute him the Messiah, and a change is supposable in the death of that human nature, leaving the divine nature unchanged. Each of the three persons of the Godhead has the same attributes, the same infinite perfections; no one can be the offspring of another: they are coequal and coeternal.

There appears to have been a conventional arrangement between the parties assigning to each person his part in the kingdom of grace among lost men. One to be denominated the Father to take precedence; one to be denominated Son to be in subjection, create all things, make the atonement for sin, in the person of the man Jesus, to have all executive management in the kingdom of grace; and one to be denominated Comforter, which was to be the Inspirer of the prophets, and the Sanctifier of sinners, and all under the executive management of the Son. And all this executive management of the Son is under the paternal direction of the Father and administered by the Son, with the concurrence of the Holy Ghost; each person concurring by consent, if not actively and officially in every measure and in every event. Matt. xxviii. 18. John v. 22. And this conventional assignment of parts to each is apparent again in the fact that when the kingdom is consummated, all these distributed official functions are to

cease, as no longer necessary, except that each one will be recognized as glorious for the part he has performed in establishing the kingdom of grace, and all is to be given up again to the general Godhead. 1 Cor. xv. 24.

4. And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Here it is distinctly stated that one ground or evidence of his Sonship is his resurrection from the dead.

The Sonship of the second person in the Godhead is not what the word signifies in its natural use among men, which is human offspring. The resurrection is an acknowledgment of the fact of his filial relation to the Father without showing the origin or mode of it.

Adam is called the son of God by creation. But this affords us no help, for God produced Adam's existence.

Probably we can get nothing more satisfactory than the convention before stated is equivalent to adoption, and includes it. It is also expressly stated that he should be called the Son of the Highest. Luke i. 32. And there is a reason or ground assigned for such an appellative, viz: his miraculous conception. Luke i. 35. But this probably means that the union of the divine nature with the human nature was that ground.

5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.

In many parallel passages this abolition of the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles is called saving all men. And Arminians seem anxious to give it a construction that falsifies it and makes revelation a falsehood; for salvation never embraced all the Jews under their own dispensation, for they were not all Israel that were of Israel. Rom. ix. 6. Salvation never was intended for those who committed the unpardonable sin; nor for those who sinned willfully after coming to the knowledge of the truth; nor for liars; nor for those who remained impenitent to the last; nor for any of the non-elect. Jer. vii. 16; xi. 14. Rom. ix. 17, 18. Isa. xxvii. 11.

He who loves to wrest the scriptures, and so to interpret them as to make them false, proves the spirit of antichrist.

In this passage the language is, "among all nations," which shows how parallel passages are to be interpreted.

So in Rev. v. 9, it is also, "out of every kindred and tongue, and people," *i. e.*, some out of each. Prov. xvi. 1-4.

6. Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

Rom. viii. 28, 29.

7. To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All in Rome who were beloved of God and called to be saints.

13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

I purposed to come unto you, that I might have some fruit among you ; but I was let, that is, hindered hitherto ; *let* means hindered.

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

To hold the truth—believe the true doctrines of revelation, is not sufficient to salvation without a penitent, holy life. James therefore taught a very important doctrine when he taught that faith would not save an impenitent wicked man, who had faith like Balaam, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord in peace. Heb. xii. 14.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Every sinner is under infinite obligation every day to repent of sin and to turn from it. But the greater the goodness of his providence to us, the greater and stronger is our obligation.

11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

We should be careful to study the divine word, and to receive it in meekness and fear. God makes a great many differences in mankind. Some are born cripples, some are born deformed, some are born deaf, and some without sight ; some are born dead,

some live an hour, a day, a week, a year, some to a hundred years; some are sickly all their lives, and some are healthy; and yet it is true that there is no respect of persons with God; for although he makes many differences between them, he does not do it on account of respect for their persons, but great reasons of another character. He has holy and wise purposes, just, wise reasons, for all these great differences. He had respect to Abel and his offering, but to Cain and his offering he had not respect. But there is no contradiction in this, for it was not out of respect for Abel's person that he had that respect, but it was for his piety, his faith, of which Cain was destitute.

12. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

If a man lived where the scriptures were not known, and lived an ungodly and wicked life, he should perish without law, *i. e.*, perish without applying the rules of the scriptures to him. He would be judged by the light of nature. Rom. i. 20. As many as live under the law, and live impenitent, ungodly, wicked lives, shall perish by that law which they transgress.

14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

If any man, ignorant of revelation, should, from moral principles, live a moral life, he would act a noble and honorable part so far, and would not be blamed for sins he did not commit. His moral life would be a great advantage to him in his society. But a moral life will save no lost sinner—nothing but regeneration, repentance and Christ can save a lost soul. But if a soul, ignorant of revelation, should have the repentance, holiness and piety of a Christian, he would, we may suppose, be thrown in the way to hear the gospel and be saved, as was Cornelius. Acts x. 5. It is easy for God in his providence to bring Philip to the eunuch, and Peter to Cornelius. And he will do it, if there is a pious soul that needs it, as the above instances show. Acts viii. 29.

It is rare that such cases occur. But if they do, they will be provided for; for piety is too precious to be lost. Rom. ii. 26, 27.

27. And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

True piety in the soul is better than outward ceremonial and formal religion.

28. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.

The meaning is not here expressed. What made any man a Jew was his paternity—his descent from Abraham; and the circumcision which God commanded Abraham to practice was that which was outward in the flesh, as every man knows. But now, since the gospel dispensation had taken the place of the law, a Jew with his circumcision only is of no account, if this is all his religion. The passage, therefore, teaches, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly only; neither is that circumcision, which only is outward in the flesh; for neither of them is of any account for acceptance with God under the gospel dispensation." Many such passages require the supply of the word only. 2 Cor. iv. 18. 1 Tim. v. 23. 1 Cor. i. 17. Rom. xi. 11. Have they stumbled, that they should fall only? and not that salvation might be gained for the Gentiles? John ix. 3; i. 13; iv. 21, 42. He would be a Jew to no good purpose who was only a Jew outwardly. But he who was one inwardly would be one to salvation; one who was in heart and soul all that the Jewish dispensation signified and intended.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? I speak as a man.

A mere carnal man might have such impious, caviling and vain thoughts.

8. And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

Some whose enmity to the doctrines of grace made them reckless and licentious, construed the Christian doctrine, that God overrules sin, so as to bring good out of the evil, to be the same as a willingness to do evil, that God may bring him good out of it. But this was far from being the disposition of pious men.

If any man harbored such a belief, his eternal destruction would be the consequence.

9. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.

That is, by nature they are all carnal, wicked, depraved, and all under condemnation. All who are unregenerate, are under condemnation, Gal. iii. 22; which was written two years before the Epistle to the Romans. John iii. 18, 36.

10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.

Since the fall of Adam all men are wicked, depraved, lost. There is not one of the human family that is not so lost and condemned, except the Lord Jesus Christ, who being conceived in a miraculous manner by the power of the Holy, was exempt from any pollutions, or any inherent depravity from his mother, who was as depraved in heart and soul as other women.

20. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified.

No one of the human family, of the lost race of Adam, is saved by his works, or the merit of his own righteousness, because they are all wicked, all defiled with sin, and can not be justified by the Holy One. All would have been lost if Christ had not come and wrought redemption for sinners.

21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

The righteousness which saves men is the righteousness of God, without any works of the law performed on the sinner's part. We can understand how Paul was completely accepted in Christ and justified without any works, being arrested by Jesus, pardoned and as completely saved as if he had never committed a sin. The righteousness of Christ is entirely sufficient, for it is the righteousness of God. The moment faith receives it, and relies alone on it, his crimson guilt is washed away, and he becomes as white as snow or as wool. And there is no difference in this respect; he that believeth is justified from all things, as he could not be by the law of Moses.

27. Where is boasting then?

Nowhere. All must lay their hand upon their mouth. All the saved are justified freely and only by grace in Jesus Christ.

31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

The obedience and sufferings of Christ made a brighter display of divine justice, and of God's regard for the law which man had violated, than anything else could have made, even if all the lost race of man had perished forever in that lake prepared for the devil and his angels. If all mankind had thus suffered eternal punishment, it would have been the suffering of the wicked; and wrath upon them would not shine with such luster as that wrath and justice do that are inflicted upon his obedient Son, whom he loved.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 15. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

If no law had been given to Adam and Eve against eating any fruit in the garden, there would have been no sin in eating of any. But when the law had been given and violated, and the race had become depraved, and every imagination of the thoughts of the heart were only evil continually, then that law was continually working wrath.

16. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.

Salvation is not placed upon any sandy foundation—upon any precarious ground. But is put upon a solid and substantial foundation, so that the promise is sure—infallible to all the heirs. Every one of the heirs given to Christ he has redeemed, and every one of them shall certainly come to him, and then as certainly be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39. 1 Pet. i. v. No one will fail; not one fail of his crown. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 8. But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Being wise above what is written, and presumptuously adding to revelation in disobedience to God, Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32, is the cause of the confusion in which we involve revelation. Death was the penalty annexed to the transgression of the law of Paradise, and the only penalty. If we would know further what death was meant, we may inquire what death our Surety suffered when he suffered the penalty for us; the only answer is, it was the death he suffered on the cross, which was a temporal death—a sacrificial temporal death. This was the death that procured salvation for sinners, because it was the penalty; nothing but the penalty could make an atonement for the sinner; nothing but the penalty could discharge the guilt of the sinner. If our Surety did not suffer it, then we are not discharged. But revelation is express. He did suffer it; we are discharged. All questions are settled. Christ died for us.

What a thankless—what a sacrilegious business does he do who makes it something else which the Surety did not endure! The penalty annexed to the transgression by the divine word was death; and the same divine word says: Christ died for us, and delivered us or redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. Gal. iii. 13. If the Surety did not endure the penalty, how was he made a curse for us? See comment on Gen. ii. 17.

9. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

How could his blood procure our justification, if it were not his death blood—his sacrificial death—his bloody death? As it is written, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. ix. 22.

The infinitely wise and holy Lawgiver knew what the Surety would have to endure, and knew what to put into the penalty, and put just that into the penalty. Gen. ii. 17. He did not put into the penalty something which the Surety could not suffer, and thus improvidently make an atonement impossible. Therefore much more being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him; we are redeemed from the curse of the law.

The law is satisfied if the exact literal penalty is inflicted. It can ask no more. It is fulfilled. It is finished. John xix. 30.

10. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

The inspired writer, in repeating this subject, has nothing to add to this sacrificial death—this bloody death—as constituting the atonement. If there were anything else belonging to it, he would have given some hint of it, in making this repeated mention of it.

19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

The obedience of One was obedience to death. And being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. This is what the scriptures teach us made the atonement. The Surety took our place as a man, that he might have our sin imputed to him, and suffer that death that was the penalty of transgressing it. Phil. ii. 8.

21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin has reigned unto the death of the whole human race, even so through grace by Christ suffering the penalty for us, dying in our stead as our Surety, we shall all hear his voice calling us up from our graves to get the victory over death and the grave, to reign with him in eternal life, and die no more.

If this be simply the statement of revelation upon this subject, it should be our statement, just simply our statement. We need not encumber it with any other perplexities with which divine wisdom has not encumbered it. 1 Cor. xv. 22. John xi. 25. Rom. vi. 23. Our Surety, by taking our place under the law, and enduring the penalty for us, has wrought out a righteousness for us that purchases and secures for us eternal life.

He being man as well as Jehovah in the person of the mediator, gave infinite merit and value to his obedience unto death, so that its infinite value was all that law and justice could demand.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

In the ravings of fanatics after errors and follies, the phases of Antinomianism have appeared to the dishonor and perplexity of saints. If it be true that the greater glory of divine grace will shine in the salvation of the greater sinners, it will always be contrary to holiness to willfully indulge in sin, or do evil that good may result; for if we hate sin, if it be evil and hateful to us, we can not consistently indulge it from any consideration. God forbids it. If therefore we do indulge it that greater glory may redound to divine grace for the pardon of it, we act on false principles; for it will not be pardoned, and therefore that greater glory will not be realized. Rom. iii. 8. To act on such a principle is contrary to Christian piety, contrary to holiness.

3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

From this object of baptism the apostle draws the logical conclusion, that we, having been baptized into Christ's death, are dead to sin and can not do evil that grace may abound. Passing from one chapter to another often continues the same subject. It is so here. This chapter begins in the middle of the subject. There is here no reference to water baptism. The subject of discussion is holiness of life. The baptism into Jesus Christ is baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that not with miraculous gifts, but sanctification or regeneration. No other baptism but this inserts us into Christ, the head of all the members of his body. If we are in him, then we are in his death, and all the benefits of it. We are in his death, in his crucifixion, in his burial, and in all his work of humiliation which he performed as our substitute. It is all ours, because it was done by him for us, in our place as our substitute.

Simon, the sorcerer of Samaria, had none of it, although he was baptized by Philip. For baptism did not confer any of these blessings and graces, nothing but faith secured them. And as this burying with Christ, this spiritual baptism, secured regeneration and faith, it secured Christ with all redemption. Some fanatical persons have supposed two things here which are not warranted, viz: That water baptism is here referred to, and that immersion was the mode of it, neither of which has any support in scripture. Both are mere assumptions—ground-

less assumptions and additions to revelation, and incur the curse of those who add to revelation. Deut. iv. 2 ; xii. 32. Rev. xxii. 18.

Where is it written that God commanded gospel baptism to be administered by immersion ? And where is it written that one in the days of the apostles was immersed in baptism ? Well, then, if there be for it neither precept nor example, it exhibits no small amount of impudence to assert it. Col. ii. 12. This witness is true. "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Tit. i. 13.

5, 6. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Water baptism has no fitness for any of these results, but sanctification or regeneration has ; for in repentance, and taking up the cross, and denying ourselves, we do crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. Gal. v. 24.

If the figure of being buried with Christ might seem to agree with immersion, the other figures, planting and crucifying, do not. Therefore the seeming agreement of burying is fallacious, and was accidental. The mode of baptism has no similarity with the mode of crucifixion. The word baptism is used when there is not meant to be any reference to the sacrament of baptism. Matt. xx. 22. And as the sacrament of baptism does signify washing and cleansing both by the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit and the application of Christ's blood, immersion is disproved ; for the first is by pouring out and the second is by sprinkling. Acts ii. 3, 17, 18, 33. Heb. ix. 12-14 ; xi. 28 ; xii. 24. There is support for sprinkling, but there is none for immersion. See also Isa. lii. 15 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, in both which prophecies water baptism is alluded to as a characteristic of the gospel dispensation, and its mode is by sprinkling, so that while there is abundant evidence for sprinkling, or shedding down, there is none for immersion.

7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

This is not said of such as have died in temporal death ; for temporal death does not free any one from sin. But he that is dead with Christ, he who is dead by Christ dying for him, in his room, dying in his place, is freed from sin.

This again shows that death was the penalty of the law. As

Christ suffered death on the cross, he actually endured the literal penalty of the law, so that they who suffered that penalty by him, by his suffering the penalty for them, are freed from sin, *i. e.*, freed from the penalty. This death which the Surety suffered for his people is the only penalty known to the law.

8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

Shall have eternal life.

17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

Two things are often placed in a relation which only one can sustain. We can see how we may be thankful that we are brought to obey from the heart that plan of grace which the gospel reveals. But that we can be thankful for having been the servants of sin is difficult to understand. If there is any scripture besides this that maintains it, we are not conversant with it.

A similar instance of two things put in a relation which only one can sustain is found, 1 Tim. iv. 3. This relates to the original Greek.

23. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If death is the only penalty of the law which the Lawgiver recognizes, because he would introduce a system of grace by which sinners can be saved, then we can see how illustrious his grace shines in this system of salvation.

If when there were leprosy in a house, every thing in it might have been considered as defiled from that fact before the priest went into it to examine it. But we see the kindness of ordering the furniture removed before the house was examined, that the furniture might escape this constructive pollution. Lev. xiv. 36. If the Lawgiver made this gracious provision, how is his gracious kindness exalted?

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 1. Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

A man in civil society is subject to the law of civil society as long as he lives in that society. So a woman who hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. This is introduced to show an exception to the general rule that a man is amenable to the law as long as he lives; for while a man or a woman lives that law that bound them together may become annulled by the death of one of the parties. So also it is with ecclesiastical dispensations. The dispensation under which a man lives may terminate and lose all its binding force. So now the Mosaic dispensation having terminated by the gospel dispensation having come in place of it; it was dead to them. The law respecting circumcision, sacrifices, and all its ritual, was dead to the nation, and no longer binding upon them: that they might be married to another, be held under another dispensation. The body of Christ suffering death on the cross had wrought this change of dispensations.

And instead of loosing them from moral obligations, it only bound them under stronger obligations to bring forth fruit unto God, even the fruit of love, repentance, gratitude and faith.

9. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

In his unbelieving days, when in ignorance, he was persecuting Christ the Lord, and his people, he felt as if he were a godly man. But when the conviction of his guilt came home to his conscience, he discovered that he was an impenitent, ungodly sinner. All his confidence in his piety failed him: he died—saw himself dead in sin.

14. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

* The law of God required spiritual service. The law required perfect obedience, perfect holiness, saying, Be ye holy: for I am holy. Lev. xix. 2. Matt. v. 48.

* When Paul was regenerated, and came to know this perfect demand of the law, he could not render it: for no Christian

can. When he would do good, evil was present with him and is so with all. This is the experience of every pious man under all dispensations to his abject humiliation. Job ix. 20 ; xlii. 6 ; xl. 4. Ezra ix. 6, 13, 15. Ps. ciii. 10. Rom. vii. 17, 18, 19, 21. Gal. v. 17.

Such is the grace of Christ in the gospel, that the humble penitent is forgiven and justified. Isa. i. 18. Rom. iv. 5 ; vii. 18, 21.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Those who are in Christ know that they are vile ; they abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes. Job xl. 4 ; xlii. 6. And there is no condemnation to them, no eternal death. They are washed white by the blood of Christ ; though by their great guilt they be red like crimson, they are washed as white as if they had never sinned. So efficacious, so rich, and so precious is the blood of Christ.

7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The unregenerate sinner has this carnal mind which has not one penitent feeling, nor one pious thought, neither can he have ; every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually. Gen. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

8. So then they that are in the flesh can not please God.

Can not do one act that is holy in God's sight.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Have not the Holy Spirit dwelling in him working repentance, gratitude, faith and every grace, and enabling him to hold on his way unto the end, then he is not one of Christ's redeemed children.

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

By the creature is meant our body that is waiting in hope of the resurrection, when the redemption and salvation of the believer will be completed and realized.

28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

What consolation faith must draw from the rich promises of the gospel of grace. But to draw this consolation, he must believe that God is on the throne working all things after the counsel of his own will. If he have not the faith, he can not draw the consolation; for without faith it is impossible to please God. And without faith the Christian can not live; for he both lives and walks by faith. Acts xvii. 28. 2 Cor. v. 7.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 2. That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

What this sorrow was is sufficiently evinced in the next verse after an abrupt parenthesis, stating a fact that he himself had been willing to be accursed from Christ as they were then willing to be accursed from Christ. This was his sorrow for them. Having been guilty of the same unbelief, he knew how to feel for them. He is speaking, not of his present or future feeling, but of the past, saying, For I myself did wish, or was willing to bear all the curse that Christ could lay upon me, *i. e.*, in his unbelieving days. But seeing his error, he has great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart now for his unbelieving brethren; for he was once in their condition, and knows how to feel for them.

The great darkness that has so long shrouded this passage that has arisen from mistranslating its tense, which is the secondarist and is equal to the English imperfect tense. I myself was willing in my unbelieving days to be accursed from Christ. A correct translation dissipates all the mists and shadows that have gathered around it.

Paul the Christian, and Paul the unbeliever, are not alike, as many seem to think, in wishing himself thus accursed from Christ. Now, as a Christian, he abhors it.

8. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Being born a Hebrew, a descendant of Abraham, if he were an unbeliever at heart, it would not entitle him to the blessing promised to Abraham's seed. Those only who were believers were counted the heirs whether they were Hebrews or not. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. iii. 29.

31. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

They misinterpreted the law, and like the Pharisees, believed works were meritorious, and would bring them salvation and all the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. This Pharisaical sentiment caused their failure. It will cause the failure of Papists who hold to works, and works of supererogation, added to Christ's righteousness, and uniting in purchasing the redemption of sinners. The erroneous appreciation of works will corrupt Arminians and all who are perverted with it. If Israel failed on this ground, so must others likewise, for there is no respect of persons with God.

Israel, that followed after the law of righteousness, did not attain it. They worked for righteousness, and therefore failed. But they who worked not attained it by believing. Rom. iv. 5. They did not work to gain righteousness by the merit of works, but believed in Christ, trusting alone in his righteousness for salvation, and attained salvation without the deeds of the law. When it is said they worked not, it is not meant that they did not strive after holiness; it means that they did not seek to be holy for a righteousness to save them; but they sought after it for another object, even to obey and honor God from love to him and to holiness. If they had no hope of salvation, they would strive to be perfectly holy out of love to God and love to holiness. But as they do hope to be justified by grace through the righteousness of Christ, their love and obedience are quickened to greater exertion, not for righteousness before God, but voluntary works of obedience from love and gratitude. Their love and gratitude become a principle of action through their whole life. They may not know whether they will be saved or not; but because they love God they will obey and serve him, whether he save them or not. They make no conditions with him about this obedience; they love him, adore him, and fear him. He is deserving of their worship and service; and he

shall have it, whether they be saved or not; for they know and feel that their service does not deserve salvation, for when they have done all their works they do not deserve salvation, but must say that they are unprofitable servants. God does not owe them salvation; Luke xvii. 10; and would do them no injustice if they should not receive it; because, as they are sinners, their salvation can only be of grace through Christ; works can not merit it—can not deserve nor purchase it; it can only come to them of grace, mere sovereign grace, as a free and undeserved gift through Christ.

How completely, then, is the gospel plan of salvation suited to our case as sinners, as sinners already lost and condemned. John iii. 18.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 3. For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

Such is the righteousness of God that he can not save sinners for any righteousness of their own getting up or performing. It would not be righteous in him.

4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The good works of Christians are indispensable to honor the gospel, to prove them fitted for heaven, and born of the Spirit. But they are of no value as works of righteousness, or as deserving salvation. Nothing but the atoning blood and work of Christ can be of any efficacy in that. Therefore the believer relies upon that, and upon that alone, for justification and acceptance with God. All his works are in his sight as filthy rags. Isa. lxiv. 6. If these, as the habitual exercises of the Christian's mind and heart and soul, he must be a new creature, created into Christ Jesus unto good works and unto a true faith. Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 20.

20. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not.

In some instances Christ was sought by Gentiles. But generally the salvation of the gospel came to them unsought. The Syrophenician woman, Matt. xv. 22, and Cornelius, Acts x. i., are exceptions. Esaias is another spelling of Isaiah. Rom. ix. 27.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 7. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

If salvation be of grace—of the free sovereign grace and mercy of the Sovereign Jehovah—and if all men are sinners, lost sinners, deserving only of everlasting death every hour they live, then election must be true, must be the only way of salvation; for he only is willing to come to Christ who is made willing. Ps. cx. 3.

If the rest were blinded, it was a righteous judgment of God upon them; for every one of the whole race of fallen man has deserved to be cut off by death, and sent to eternal darkness and destruction at any and at every hour of his wicked life, and sealed in the darkness of the eternal pit forever. If God spare any in life, it is only of grace and mercy. Justice does not ask it: no one of our fallen sinful race deserves to draw a single breath of life in his sins. It is of mercy and grace that any are indulged, while millions are cut off in their career of wickedness, as all deserve to be. How glorious is that sovereign mercy that spares this wicked world to enjoy the light of the gospel and the offers of salvation by grace.

11. I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

Here again the word "only" has to be supplied to carry out the mind of the Spirit. Have they stumbled only that they should fall? No, but for another purpose also, that salvation may come to the Gentiles to provoke them to jealousy, to provoke the Jews to jealousy. Acts xiii. 46-50; xviii. 6; xxviii. 25-29. Rom. xi. 8-14.

17. And if some of the branches be broken off.

Some of the branches of the Jewish Church were broken off by unbelief, by becoming only dead branches. Not that any pious man had fallen from grace; but they had grown up and taken their places in the visible church without regeneration, which is proved by their unbelief. John v. 46.

24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which

is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree.

It was contrary to nature for a branch of the wild olive to be growing and bearing fruit in the good olive. No other contrariety to nature is alluded to by the inspired writer.

25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.

Blindness only in part had occurred among the Jews, only some of the branches of the Jewish Church were broken off. And this is to continue until the Gentile world shall be converted to the gospel. The efforts to convert the Jews before that event will fail. The apostles and the five hundred brethren converted during Christ's ministry, 1 Cor. xv. 6, were Jews, and a few others in every generation may be gathered in; but the great body of them will remain in unbelief until the Gentiles shall be converted.

The heavens have received Jesus until all the prophecies concerning the gospel dispensation are accomplished. Acts iii. 21.

26. And so all Israel shall be saved.

The promise secures the conversion of the Hebrews. Before that conversion many may die and be lost. But when that time arrives all that remain alive will be converted and saved.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

Prove, experience, illustrate.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Christians are slow to learn the heavenly things of the gospel, to let their light shine before men.

If Christians were to obey the gospel, it would be difficult for the world to carry out their barbarous and brutal customs and practices.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 1. Let every soul be subject unto higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

The power to which we are here required to submit is the civil power. In a mixed government it may sometimes be a question which is the power that is?

In the revolutionary affair of '76, it was interpreted to be the state government. But in our late difficulty it was not the state, but the general government. One was a great heresy. And if no honest attempt has been made to settle the moral question, it shows a presumptuous recklessness that is not consistent with piety.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSE 8. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.

It concerns every one to know what ecclesiastical dispensation the ministry of Christ was under. Therefore the Holy Spirit providently informs us. He came to obey the law of Moses, and to put an end to it by offering that great sacrifice of himself of which all the sacrifices of the Mosaic dispensation were only types and shadows, and therefore could never take away sin. But offering himself upon the cross did take it away, did make an atonement—a full satisfaction for all the sins of his people. The Mosaic dispensation must have remained until it was fulfilled and taken out of the way by being nailed with him to the cross. Col. ii. 14. All the baptisms and washings performed by John and by the disciples of Christ were of the same kind, even to make Christ manifest

to Israel. They were legal and not gospel ordinances. Acts xix. 1-5.

11. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

The call upon the Gentiles to praise God is upon all of them, and was because the gospel was opened to them as well as to Jews. It was opened as a general privilege to all nations alike, without any distinction; but not to all individuals, for if among the Jews salvation was not for all, but only for the elect, it would of course be equally so among the Gentiles. If it were true of Jews that the election obtained it, and the rest were blinded, it would be so among the Gentiles, for there is no respect of persons with God. He would not do a better part for the Gentiles than he would for his own covenant people, the children of Abraham, his friend. But all unbelievers will be lost. John vi. 65.

12. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

In Him alone shall Gentile believers find salvation, and in no other. But only believing Gentiles will find salvation in Him, and not those who have committed the unpardonable sin, nor those who have sinned willfully after they have come to the knowledge of truth. Mark iii. 29. Heb. vi. 4-6; x. 26. John iii. 18. Rev. xxi. 8. John iii. 3.

16. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ, to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

No others are offered to God but such as are thus sanctified.

CHAPTER XVI.

24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to be with all supposes his omnipresence, without which it can not be effective. Therefore he is God equally with the Father.

26. But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

This limits such expressions, as all men, all the Gentiles, and confines them to those who are sanctified and become obedient to the faith among all nations, else universalism would be proved.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 8. Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Confirm them unto the end, or unto the end of their lives and unto the day of judgment, according to 1 Peter i. 5. Not by any rite of confirmation, but by the continual supply of the grace of his Spirit.

9. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

If God has called us unto this grace, he will faithfully hold us up and secure the triumph of his grace to the last moment of our warfare. Rom. xi. 29; viii. 28-30. 1 Cor. x. 13. Job xvii 9. Joshua i. 5. 1 Sam. xii. 22. John xiii. 1.

10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Their religious views and sentiments must be in entire harmony; for as they have one Bible they must take their teaching from it, believe nothing different. Any difference from it is a rejection of it, and is infidelity. As far as we differ from revelation, we set up another gospel.

Men often seem to think that we are not bound to take revealed truth as our canon, but may believe any thing we please. This is to profess that we are not the servants nor the children of God. His servants we are, to whom we obey. If we set up for independence and believe what pleases us, then we profess to disregard and despise God, and to set ourselves above him.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural man usually means the unregenerated man; for he has a wicked heart that is contrary to God, and to the mind of God revealed in his word. But unconverted sinners under conviction know something more than the natural man, as Balaam did, and as devils who believe and tremble. But if such know something more than natural men, or men in a state of nature, yet their hearts are no better, for they have the carnal mind that is enmity against God. Rom. viii. 7.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1. And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

He could not address them as persons well versed in divine things; but only as persons who had just entered upon religion and were babes in Christ, having little knowledge.

7. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase.

Ministers who preach the gospel have no power to make it successful in subduing and renewing the hearts of the hearers. This is God's work alone. Verse 9.

12. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.

To build upon this foundation was to add professors of religion to the church. See Eph. ii. 20-22. 1 Pet. ii. 5.

14. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If the members he has received; the proselytes he has made

in preaching Christ, are really converted, he shall receive a reward. Hence, this building on Christ of wood, hay, stubble, is of unsound proselytes which will not endure trial. It can not be unsound doctrine, because that would evaporate before the trial would be made.

15. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

He himself shall be saved, being a real orthodox believer, preaching the true gospel; but so lax in discipline as to admit of unconverted proselytes.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 2. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

Ministers must be faithful both in doctrine and in discipline; for unfaithfulness in either would corrupt the church and prevent its saving influence.

13. Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

When defamed by evil men they took no revenge, but only entreated. Were treated by persecutors as the offscouring of all things. Heb. xi. 36-38. 2 Tim. ii. 25. Rom. xii. 17.

20. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

The word might be truly preached, and yet the power of the Spirit might not accompany it. 1 Cor. iii. 6. Matt. xiii. 58. Heb. iv. 2.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.

Ungodliness must not be suffered in the church, either in doctrine or discipline. 1 Cor. v. 13. Tit. iii. 10. 1 Tim. v. 20. Matt. xviii. 15-17.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

As the unbeliever can not enter the kingdom of glory, it is unsuitable for them to be in the church here.

12. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.

All things were lawful to the apostle that were lawful to the brethren. But what was lawful might not be expedient for him. 1 Cor. ix. 5, 6, 15.

19. What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

The sacredness of the bodies of Christians ought to be appreciated, for they are devoted to God, have the Holy Ghost dwelling within them, and they are the Lord's and not their own; and should bring forth fruit unto God, living not to themselves, nor for themselves, but living unto Him who died for them and rose again. Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSE 10. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.

As the marriage bond is one, it forbids the husband to depart as much as it forbids the wife. And it requires him to remain unmarried or to be reconciled to his wife. Divorces are of no force, except for one great cause.

14. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.

These marriages had taken place between the parties before one became converted. And they had written to the apostle to

know how they were to conduct now under such circumstances, seeing marriage with unbelievers was not permitted to believers. Although they might not contract such marriages when one party was a believer; yet now as they were contracted ignorantly they might not sunder the bonds. The unbelieving party should be deemed constructively sanctified, so that their children should be deemed to be born in the church, and should be entitled to baptism as well as if both the parents were believers. This is the constructive cleanness of the children, and resulted from the constructive sanctification of the unbelieving parent.

And all this proceeds upon the ground of the Abrahamic covenant which remains in all its force under the gospel dispensation. Gal. iii. 29. Rebellious and unbelieving men may disobey it, but they can not evade it. The truth will remain.

21. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

Being called into the Lord, being a bond-servant, he must not care nor be troubled about it, nor despise his master because they were brethren in the church. 1 Tim. vi. 2. But rather feel under stronger bonds to be faithful to him.

26. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

Good, *i. e.*, expedient on account of the persecutions to which Christians in that age were subjected. The same is shown, Luke xxiii. 29; xxi. 23. The cares of a family in those seasons of persecution were an insupportable burden upon Christians who could not rescue them from overwhelming calamities that came upon them.

28. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

As marriage was a condition of divine ordination, as was tilling the ground, it could not be unlawful. It was proper and right, and could neither be holy nor sinful. Marriage was no more holy than agriculture.

29. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none.

The things of this world are evanescent and vanishing away.

In those seasons of persecution when men had to leave their families and flee for their lives, they who had wives were as though they had none, and those who bought or possessed property felt constrained to dedicate it to the poor brethren, would be as though they possessed not. Again the time was short that they were to remain in any of their worldly relations ; which all were passing away.

36. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

But if any man think that he behaveth unseemly toward his virgin by opposing her marriage, whether his daughter, his ward, or his betrothed, he may consent to the marriage without contracting any sin or guilt by so consenting.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 7. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

Notwithstanding, Christians and the gospel are the light of the world, Matt. v. 14 ; and, notwithstanding, Christ was called the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, there were men when Paul wrote this epistle who were so deep in darkness as not to know the error and wickedness of idolatry. If these men conscientiously believed in idolatry, then conscience is not a sure guide to a man, but may lead him down to destruction if his heart be not right. Prov. xiv. 12. Acts xxvi. 9.

9. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.

We are responsible to God for the use we make of our liberty and for any injury that may accrue to them who are weak or ignorant through our carelessness.

11. And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

If this can not occur, because God will counteract it, yet we

may be guilty of acting such a part as to put them in danger of perishing, as if we did not care if they were led into idolatry and destroyed. What we do may have that character and that bearing. Rom. xiv. 15. Matt. xxiv. 24.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSE 27. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The apostle had no doubt about the certainty of the doctrine of grace, or about the certain perseverance of the saints. But he could not be careless or trifling in relation to this or to any kindred subject which would be to tempt God. The Lord Jesus would not cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple because he had the certain promise to be kept in all his ways, because he would not tempt God. No Christian can be careless or presumptuous, or act on Antinomian principles for the same reason.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 1. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea.

It is unusual that the phrase, our fathers, should be confined to one generation. "Were all under the cloud" that signified God's presence with Israel, Exod. xl. 34, 38; Num. x. 34, passed through the sea; were within its banks, but not in its waters. So the people could be in a river and not be in its waters; only being between the banks of a river and on dry ground.

2. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

That the people were all sprinkled by a spray of water from both the cloud and from the sea, is easy enough to understand; for the wind dividing the waters of the sea would sprinkle some mist upon them, and it is written that the clouds poured out water, Ps. lxxvii. 17, 20. They would then be sprinkled by the rain from the clouds, and by the spray of the sea carried by the wind which blew the waters into two parts.

And this sprinkling is, by divine authority, is called baptism. Our fathers then all passed through the sea on dry ground, and were baptized by sprinkling. And scriptures do not show that there ever was any instance of baptism by immersion, nor warrant any belief of it.

4. And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

There was no visible rock following them; it was a spiritual Rock only.

11. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

All is written about creation, and about Adam's fall, and about Cain and Abel, and indeed the whole of the history concerns us, upon whom the great lessons furnished by the world's history impose their obligations upon us.

12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

As the heart is deceitful, a man of strong hope may be as Simon Magus was, in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity, and, therefore, in danger of everlasting destruction. If he be a Christian he may fall, as many have, into sin and shame, as did David, Solomon and Peter.

13. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.

It seems that the faithfulness of our Father refers to his watching over us, if we are his, to not permit us to be assaulted with trials beyond the strength he gives; so that our standing is secured by grace.

16, 17. The cup of blessings which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. If we being many are one bread, the poor, ignorant Papist must see transubstantiation again converting all the bodies of Christians into bread; so

that a Christian has neither skin, flesh, blood, nor bones ; for he is nothing but bread.

23. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.

All things that were not sinful were lawful to Him, but they were not all expedient. Prudence and discretion forbid many lawful indulgences.

24. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

Let no man seek his own interest or welfare only, but the interests and welfare of others also. The word only is often omitted for brevity of style and must be supplied to conserve the sense, and even the truth of scripture. A man may seek his own interest, but must not seek that only if he must love his neighbor as himself. Philemon 16. Gal. iv. 7.

29. Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?

Because a man must love his neighbor as himself and watch for the good of his soul. He might, as respects his own conscience, eat meat offered to an idol for which he had no regard. But if his neighbor seeing it might be deceived and destroyed, then he must not eat. Thus his liberty is measured by another man's conscience. 1 Cor. viii. 8, 13.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 5. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head.

It is written, By their fruits ye shall know the friends of God from his enemies. Christians can not trample under foot the commandments of God as the wicked can. See also Deut. xxii. 5. Rom. ix. 11-18.

10. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.

The subject is having their heads covered while women are paying or prophesying in church. The apostle forbids such

public exercises ; but if they violate divine authority, let them have their heads covered, show some modesty. Angels are present in worshipping assemblies, and know how indecent it is for females to engage in public worship and take an active part with men. 1 Tim. ii. 8-14.

19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

The Head of the church makes use of heresies to cleanse the church. The wicked follow error and do as the carnal professors do, and thus show themselves by their fruits.

25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

After they had eaten the sacramental bread, he took the cup, because it contained the wine, and then by the figure metonymy he calls it the cup, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, when it only was a figure of it—a representation of it—as it was a figure or representation of his blood as the bread was of his body. But then it was not the cup that was this figure, but the wine in the cup was the figure. How clearly then does he show that he was speaking figuratively ?

26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

Ye show his death by representing his broken body and shed blood.

That the doctrine of transubstantiation is untrue we know by the elements being still called by their original names, bread and cup. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup." If they were still bread and cup as at first, then we know that they were not changed into something else. And the Papists may know it, if they will. See also 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28.

But if they wish to believe lies and falsehoods that they may be destroyed, we are sorry for their infatuation. This also detects another falsehood, viz : their infallibility. An infallible church built upon a thousand falsehoods is worse than a sandy foundation. Acts xv. 24.

29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

This holy ordinance is for the comfort of the children of God, to encourage their faith, to rekindle their gratitude, to cultivate their love to one another, and to their Lord.

And it is a dangerous ordinance ; for it may be abused so as to bring judgment upon such as are unworthy partakers of it.

If any suppose that they will be blessed in receiving the elements, because they therein do really eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood, they deceive themselves ; for this is to eat and to drink unworthily, not understanding that it is by faith that they eat his flesh in a figure ; for they are accepted and saved by faith, and are justified by faith. They do not eat the flesh of the Lord, nor drink his blood actually, but in faith which trusts and confides in his atonement.

To believe that they shall be benefited because they do in reality eat the flesh of the Lord and drink his blood is to believe a falsehood, and to bring a curse upon them for their error, their willful error, against the light and against known truth ; they know that what they eat is not flesh, but bread, and the Lord says it is bread, 1 Cor. xi. 28 ; and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup.

Many were weak, many were sickly, and many were asleep in death, because they did not solemnly receive this ordinance in faith, did not believe the Lord that it was bread, as 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28 says it was.

If any one calls it any thing else he makes God's word to be false.

So also if any one receives the bread and wine, not having been regenerated, and born of the Spirit, and renewed by the Holy Ghost, he also eats and drinks unworthily. None but Christians can expect any benefit from the Lord's table.

Superstitious notions and damnable heresies may appear very pleasing to carnal men, but they are odious to God ; neither can they please the children of God who want something better than fanaticism and falsehood in their sacred things.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 1. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

These spiritual gifts were endowments of miraculous powers bestowed on some of the officers of the church, such as speaking with tongues, that is, speaking in languages which they

had never learned, healing the sick, interpreting tongues, or interpreting what others spake in a language that was unknown to the people. Although these were very different, yet they were wrought in those who had them by the same Holy Spirit, by one God.

7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

These miraculous manifestations of the Divine Spirit were bestowed on those few officers of the church to profit others—to accomplish good to the hearers rather than to themselves. Although it is said they were given to every man, the expression is limited to every man that had them, not all the ministers, nor all the members of the church. This is made evident in their enumeration, 1 Cor. xii. 8, where it is said: "For to one is given the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit."

11. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

That is dividing to every man who had them according to the Spirit's own will and pleasure. Although it is also that God gives the spirit of conviction, of regeneration, and sanctification to every man severally as he will, for their own benefit, yet this is not the subject of the apostle's discourse in this place, but only the miraculous endowments which were manifested in a few. The apostle again refers to it in the end of the chapter, where he asks, Are all apostles? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and not have charity.

Here we are taught that a man may be a prophet, a worker of miracles, be able to move mountains, and yet be destitute of true piety. Num. xxii. 6, 12, 20, 22. 1 Sam. xvi. 14, 23.

A man must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, be sanctified and made holy, and thus fitted for heaven, or he can never go there. John iii. 3. Heb. xii. 14. Matt. xxv. 1-12.

5. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own.

The word only is omitted here, and must be supplied after the word own, because it is a Christian's duty to seek his own good in this world and in that which is to come. It is likewise his duty to provide for his own household. He is required only to love his neighbor as himself. 1 Tim. v. 8.

7. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

The Christian disposition to meekness, endurance, gentleness and charity is essential to piety. Without it we can not let our light shine, nor do honor to the gospel. All things is frequently used in the sacred word in a limited sense. We must be guarded against so widely interpreting it, as some would have us to interpret it, lest we should teach false doctrines and make revelation at variance with itself. We should bear all injuries meekly and patiently that we may preserve and exhibit the meekness and benevolence of the Christian character, and we should hope for all good from our brethren, and not be forward to think evil of them. The passage is not to be interpreted as teaching us to think and believe all evil of our brethren in believing all things.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSE 3. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

Prophesieth, that is, preacheth, or exhorteth, or teacheth. The word does not always mean to predict or foretell future events.

7. And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?

On the face of this verse all instrumental music in the church seems to be condemned.

This appears also to comport with Heb. ix. 9, 10, and ought to awaken more inquiry in the church respecting carnal delights being introduced into the spiritual devotions of the church. It is not said that organs, melodeons and harps and violins are wrong in being made accompaniments in Sabbath worship.

But the writer knows that there are those who doubt and question their propriety, and who would prefer vocal music, and that by the church without a choir.

If some feel satisfied that instrumental music is suitable and proper in our Christian assemblies, because David used the harp, it may be said in reply that he also danced before the Lord in worship, 2 Sam. vi. 14; and the above quoted passage from Hebrews, respecting the Jewish Church and its ordinances, also bears upon the subject which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings and carnal ordinances, imposed upon them until the time of reformation. The question then is, whether the time of reformation be not now come to dispense with such carnal things in our more spiritual dispensation, and we worship not with dumb and senseless instruments, but with our hearts and voices, making melody to the Lord? There are those in the church who would rejoice in the change, and to have none but vocal music in public worship. If David's example is authority, why not dance as he did?

These suggestions are made to induce inquiry and examination into the subject; and it does seem that there is ground to question the propriety of such things in the more spiritual dispensation under which we live and with which we are blessed.

If the praise of God is by our modern use of organs and choirs almost entirely taken from the congregation, it seems that little more need be shown for their rejection.

22. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Tongues signify the miraculous power conferred upon many ministers of the church in those early days; and, being a miracle, manifested the divine power, and thus were a sign to unbelievers that God was with the church. But prophesying, teaching or exhorting was naturally adapted to believers to comfort, instruct, and to build them up in grace and faith. But in the two succeeding verses it seems that the apostle warns them not to abuse this miraculous power of speaking in languages which they have never learned, and which were unknown to their brethren, and which it would be necessary for some other one to interpret to the congregation.

Once I was at a loss to see the propriety and consistency of these three verses. They appeared to involve a contradiction, and for fourteen years they were under a cloud to me, and seemed to involve three contradictions.

But when I saw that the apostle was showing the impropriety of ostentatiously displaying miracles in a church meeting where only the brethren were contemplated, as shown by the whole church being assembled in one place, then those seeming discrepancies vanished in a moment, and the whole subject became perfectly clear. Although miracles were proper in promiscuous assemblies, they were useless where only the members of the church were contemplated or addressed; for as they were already believers, they did not need miracles to convince them that the gospel was true. The unbeliever who might drop in to see how these Christians deported themselves would be only a spectator, and would perceive the inconsistency of showing miraculous powers in a church meeting, and would esteem those who did so to be mad or foolish. But if he only saw them discoursing about divine things to the comfort and edification of the brethren, he would appreciate the propriety of their conduct, and when he went away he would carry with him the conviction of their propriety and discretion that might be a benefit to him.

When it was said, Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers, but prophesying serveth not for unbelievers, it evidently teaches that it was speaking of the natural adaptedness of miracles to convince and profit unbelievers, as preaching or exhortation were naturally adapted to benefit believers. But then when an unbeliever dropped into a church meeting, and saw them speaking with tongues to those who did not need miracles, the impropriety would disgust him. But although prophesying was not naturally adapted to be useful to unbelievers, yet when such an one saw Christians acting discreetly and judiciously, their discreet conduct might impress him favorably.

30. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

In a church meeting, where speaking or preaching is progressing, and a revelation be made to one who is sitting there, let him who has this revelation wait in silence until the one who is speaking has finished what he has to say, and sits down, and then he may rise and speak. Let there be no interruption, no disorder, no confusion in their assemblies.

34. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

If some disobey the law, they show what they are; for there must be also heresies among you that they which are approved

may be made manifest. 1 Cor. xi. 3-15, 19. Eph. v. 22-24. Col. iii. 18. 1 Tim. ii. 11-14. By their fruits ye shall know them.

37. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

If the Sacred Scriptures are of God, let us treat them as such by receiving them, doing as they teach, or else we reject them, and show ourselves unbelievers "To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. viii. 20. John viii. 47.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSE 2. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Some pervert this passage by quoting it to justify collections in the church on the Lord's day, when it only requires a person to lay by him as something dedicated to God and to be reserved sacredly for the Lord's use. He may lay it in some drawer in his desk, or lay it by in any suitable place, and then any other day except the Lord's day he may hand it over to the treasurer; but he may not profane the sanctuary of God and the worship of God by taking it to the house of God on the Lord's day. This would be both profaning the Lord's day and desecrating the Lord's house. If he pays it over to any on that day that person must receive it, count it, and enter in his book, or charge his memory with it, and thus cause him to charge his mind with worldly matters that are not suitable for the holy day.

If a chest or box were so placed in the church that contributions could be dropped into it, it would be like laying by in store; for it would not be a business transaction between men, it would only be between man and the Lord.

22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran atha.

If the tender mercy of Christ and his goodness in offering himself to die for us do not excite and warm our liveliest affections, we show how unfeeling and wicked our hearts are and how dangerous our condition is.

23. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

As they would be in a thousand different places, how could the grace of Christ be with them to keep, forgive, comfort, sanctify and protect them, unless he be God ? the omnipresent God ? No more evidence of his divinity is needed.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 2. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the Savior were only a creature—a man and not the infinite One, he would have no grace to bestow. Being associated with God the Father in bestowing grace upon poor souls throughout the world, proves him to be God; and ought to convince Griesbach and all others.

11. Ye also helping together by prayer for us.

The church is one body, one interest, one kingdom. Their prayers should ascend for the ministers and for all the members, for the promotion of all her interest. Neglect of it may retard her progress, while continued, fervent and devout prayer will help her progress.

12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom.

The ministers of the gospel should remember that God has chosen and set apart earthen vessels to convey the instructions of his grace to a lost world, and they are not to make any display of their own wisdom or parts, but serve their Master and set forth the instructions of his gospel.

18. But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

Was not spoken from our own authority, or as our word; but as God's word.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 6. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.

Such a man—one who had been made the subject of discipline in the Corinthian Church.

11. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

The enemy is plying every means in his power to trouble and dishonor the church by stirring up the restrained remains of our depraved nature to commit sin, and thus to bring trouble and disgrace upon us and upon the gospel. We should watch and pray that we may be kept from yielding to his temptation. And when any do yield to him we must faithfully apply the discipline of the church to reclaim them. And if that can not be done, we must separate them from our communion, that the disgrace may rest upon them alone.

15. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

The glorious goodness and grace of God are displayed in employing the ministry to save the souls of lost men. And by this effort to save them divine goodness and grace are displayed whether they are saved or lost. If they are lost, the gospel they have rejected will fall like a millstone upon them, aggravating their guilt.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

No man can do any thing or think any thing independently of God, for in him we live and move and have our being. So the Lord said, No man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father; for without me ye can do nothing. John vi. 65; xv. 5. Phil. iv. 13.

10. For even that which was made glorious had no

glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

Glorious things seem to lose their glory when put with things that are much more bright in glory.

14. But their minds were blinded: for unto this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

The scriptures of the Old Testament as well as of the New, are sufficiently plain to teach men the truth. If they are not taught and enlightened, it is because there is some fault in them that prevents them from receiving the truth that is plainly revealed. The coming of the Messiah was plainly revealed to the Jews, the time when he should come, and the place where he should be born. Isa. vii. 14. Dan. ix. 24, 27. Micah v. 2. The Jews knew well where Christ was to be born, for when Herod inquired of them they could tell him. Matt. ii. 5. They showed that they had knowledge on this subject. Do not Quakers know that the eucharist and the sacrament of baptism are commanded in the gospel? 1 Cor. xi. 24. Matt. xxviii. 19. They do know as well as believers do know. But yet they reject what they know to be true because their hearts are not right.

Do not other heretics know? Do not believers in universal salvation know that, at the final judgment the Judge will say to the wicked, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Indeed, they do know it as well as believers know it.

Do not Unitarians know as well as others the second person in the Godhead is the God who created all things? John i. 14. Indeed they know it. Why not receive it then? because they do not like it.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 3. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

There are vast numbers of the fallen children of Adam to whom the truth comes not with its proper force of light and power. The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. The carnal mind is enmity against God, for

it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. If men were not evil and perverse they would not love darkness rather than light. It must be exceedingly perverse and unwise to love darkness rather than light, for it is choosing death rather than life.

Such are said to be lost, although they are here in the land of light and privileges, because their hearts are hardened and their minds are blinded. This shows them to be lost: as it is written, He that believeth not is condemned already. Why does he not hasten, and run, and fly to Christ for salvation? Truly he must be dead in trespasses and sin. Salvation calls him continually with the kind voice of love and mercy. But he regards it not. He is lost. Sin has its strong bands upon him. And he will not fly to Christ to break his iron bands and set his poor soul free.

4. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The god of this world is the evil one, the power of evil. He it is that blinds the mind of the wicked men, and hardens their hearts to hinder them from believing the gospel.

Christ the Word is the image of God, his exact representative, having all his perfections, and all his character and attributes; for it is written of him, "Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person." What more could be said to show his divine nature?

5. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son. The Son never derived his being from any quarter; for He is himself the Eternal, Everliving and Almighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. Isa. ix. 6.

In the second Psalm, it is written, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." The begetting relates to his human nature, and was manifested in his conception and his resurrection; and

this is his being begotten in decree, in the divine intention and purpose when they were future, when it was spoken by the Psalmist; and it is so interpreted in the word. Luke i. 35 Acts xiii. 33. Rom. i. 4. It has no reference to the origination of his being, but to the manifestation of his Messiahship.

17. For our light of affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far mere exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

If our afflictions, which are only for a moment compared with that eternal misery which we deserve, are necessary to prepare us for greater glory and bliss in heaven than we should have had without them, then we should be resigned, submissive and patient under them, because they are God's hand; and we may remember that they are sent in Fatherly love. Heb. xii. 6.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 14. For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead.

By misunderstanding this passage, the writer supposed that the last clause was a declaration that all the human race must have been dead in trespasses and sins, else it could not be that Christ should have died for them all. But after several years of this darkness, he was enlightened and reclaimed by studying Rom. vi. 7; he that is dead is freed from sin. As those who have suffered temporal death are not so freed, and as those who are dead in trespasses and sins are not so freed, he came to the conclusion that the meaning of both passages is, "dead" by having the death of Christ imputed to them. Christ died for all the elect, for all those who were given to him. John xvii. 2. Ps. cx. 3. This does not discourage any from coming to Christ but cavers; for many come to him daily and receive salvation. Rom. vi. 3.

16. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

That is, we do not know Him after the flesh any more. Such adjuncts are to be interpreted according to the subject,

and are not to be applied beyond. What is meant by not knowing any man after the flesh, is in relation to their future state, which we can not determine from their appearance here in time.

19. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

The trespasses of wicked men, the impenitent, we see and know are imputed unto them. Those He reconciles only are delivered from this imputation, and they are of the world of mankind, as explained in the parallel passage. Rev. v. 9. 1 John v. 19.

To interpret this passage as meaning all that the words might mean considered in themselves, and separate from the context and the subject, would be to wrest it, to make it teach what is not true, to ignore facts, to produce discrepancies in revelation, and to deceive ourselves; for we see that the whole world is not reconciled to God, but lieth in wickedness. 1 John v. 19. Although it is true that Christ came to save sinners; it is not true that he came to save all sinners actually. And yet it is true that he came to save sinners, if he save none other than sinners.

21. For he hath made Him to be sin.

That is, a sin-offering.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 8. I robbed other churches.

Many words in revelation have to be interpreted in a symbolical sense, and not in their natural sense. We know that the apostle did not rob churches, nor wrong them. And yet he says forgive me this wrong. xii. 13.

13. For such are false apostles.

The apostle severely censures those wicked men who accused him for self-sacrifice in promoting the gospel. The unbridled tongues of wicked men show what they are: as it is written, "By their fruits ye shall know them." While they think to get praise for their devotion to the gospel, they only get censure for evil speaking.

14. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

The wicked often assume the character of the good to deceive men, and to accomplish their evil purposes. Rev. xii. 9.

17. That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

This must be considered a difficult passage; for why put in such a connection something which is not given of God. But what the apostle said, if not after God, in the sense of its being spoken of divine authority, was nevertheless true; but it is spoken only on the apostle's authority: for many things might be said in truth which were not commanded; for all that is true is not revealed. But so much is revealed as God would give us on his authority. We can conceive that the apostle was taught to say these things upon his own authority.

20. For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage.

When Joseph was feloniously kidnapped by his brethren, in the anguish of his soul he submitted patiently and meekly. So when one was sold for theft, or for any other debt they submitted meekly, because they were the children of God. Four Presbyterian ministers of my own Synod have said, that if they were slaves they would kill their masters to get their liberty, if they saw any way by which it would succeed. But that is the spirit of Antichrist. 1 John iii. 15.

When they habitually submitted they were enslaved in the usual and lawful manner, and not by manstealing as Joseph was. See Exod. xxi. 7; xxii. 3. Lev. xxv. 39, 45. 1 Cor. vii. 21. Tit. ii. 9, 10. Gen. xvi. 9; xvii. 12, 13. Philemon xii 15.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 5. Of such a one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

It must seem then that this man was not Paul, but another saint.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 4. For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.

This is not paradoxical, for if Messiah was really human as well as divine, he must have had human weakness as well as almighty strength. He had the weakness and mortality of man, or he could not have been put to death in the flesh. 1 Peter iii. 18.

11. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect.

Although perfection to fallen men is an impossibility, yet it is the duty of every human being, because imperfection in holiness is sinful, which a holy God and his holy law must always oppose and condemn. It is commanded to us to be perfect even as our Father which in heaven is perfect, and because sin and every degree of it is wrong and evil. Matt. v. 48. An evil heart and all its effusions deserves eternal death independent of all its circumstances; it is wicked in infants, in children and in adults. Nothing can justify, nothing can excuse it; it is wicked in itself.

14. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

This supposes the omnipresence of all the three persons of the Trinity, and proves that there are three that bear record in heaven. 1 John v. 7.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

If the Son or Word was God, it would seem that he did not need to have the Father raise him from the dead. If he did not need it, the Father might act in it because he loved the Son, and because he would show his divine approval of the work which the Son was engaged in.

4. The Son, as he was the mighty God, had power to both lay down his life and to take it again. He could as easily raise his own body as he could raise the body of Lazarus. For as the Divine Being must always be the same without variable-ness or shadow of turning, his divine power as the mighty God was just the same during the three days that his body lay in the tomb that it was before and after. Besides as the three persons of the Godhead are one, what is done by one is, in some sense, done by all of them. And yet the scriptures never speak of either person taking human nature to become the Messiah, but the Son. But as their counsels are one, the three were as really agreed in will respecting it as was the will of the Son. Therefore what any one of them does, it is proper to say, God does.

6. I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.

They were not really removed, but were perplexed by false teachers, so as to need this reproof to guard them from the defection to which they were exposed.

10. For do I now persuade men, or God?

Men only was he endeavoring to persuade to adhere to God and to truth.

15. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace.

It is not uncommon with inspired writers to define what God they speak of. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Gen. xxxi. 13. 2 Chron. xx. 6. Ps. lxxxvi. 10. Hosea xi. 9. Rom. xv. 5. 1 Cor. viii. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Heb. iii. 4.

19. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Paul on this visit saw none of the twelve but Peter and James the Lord's brother. James the Lord's brother is confessedly the son of Alpheus and Mary, which Mary was either the mother of Jesus, or her sister. If she was Mary's sister, then she and her sister were both named Mary. If this is absurd to suppose, then, after Joseph's death, Alpheus had married the widow, that is, had married the Virgin Mary, and had this son by her as well as other children. And then James the less was the Lord's brother. But as this subject is not deemed of importance to us, it is not definitely explained to us.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them that were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

Here is a remarkable display of modest humility in the apostle, who, having received his knowledge of the gospel by the revelation of Jesus Christ, is yet inquiring of his brother apostles whether it was right. This also shows his entire confidence in them, and that they understood the subject. We have a similar instance of the modesty of the Baptist, who, after being told by a voice from heaven at the baptism of Christ that he was the Son of God, afterward sent messengers to Christ to inquire of him, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Matt. xi. 3.

Paul evidently had no doubt that the apostles knew their business, and as they were commissioned to commence the gospel dispensation, they were fully instructed in their work. And we can hereby see clearly that if they neither established

diocesan episcopacy, nor popery, then they are not of God, but are corruptions since introduced by wicked and ambitious men. Matt. xxiii. 8-12; xx. 25, 26, 27. Eph. i. 22; iv. 5. 11. If the verse 11 enumerates the officers of the church for the perfecting of the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, and if diocesans and popes are omitted, then we know that they are not of divine appointment, and do not pertain to the ministry.

Then if we read the beginning of Acts, and see that neither pope nor diocesan was set up in the first century of the primitive church, we can know that they are corruptions which have been introduced since the apostles, and that the primitive church had no such officers. And we can know also that the papal church is not the primitive church.

3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Titus was a Gentile, and the false brethren, Judaizing teachers, wanted him to be circumcised. But the Apostle Paul and his adherents did not yield to them—did not circumcise him.

6. But of those who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person: for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me.

The leading ministers could add nothing to Paul's knowledge of the gospel, nor to his commission; for he had both from the Lord, and they could not be increased nor improved. But on the other hand, instead of being unprofitable, they confirmed both his knowledge and his commission to the Gentiles.

8. For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.

Peter's special commission directed him to the Jews, as Paul's commission set him over the Gentiles. But although all the apostles and all the ministers might preach when emergencies required in any place and to all men, yet the mission of Paul set him over or among the Gentiles, as the commission of Peter expressly sent him to the Jews.

Now this did not belong to their apostolic office; but to the location of their fields of labor, one among the Gentiles, and the other among the Jews, for they were both apostles and of equal grade

Hence it is clear that if Peter was pope among the Jews, then was Paul pope among the Gentiles. And as the Gentiles were by far the greater part of the world, Paul was the universal bishop, or nearly so, and Peter was pope only among the small sect of the Jews.

Another beam of light gleams upon us. As Peter's commission directed him to the Hebrews, if he were obedient to his Lord, he would confine himself chiefly to Judea. If therefore he was a good man and regarded his divine commission, he would not go to the Gentiles, which belonged to Paul's jurisdiction. For as Rome was a Gentile city, it belonged to Paul's jurisdiction. Therefore ecclesiastical history is to be credited in the alleged fact that Peter never was at Rome. But why the bishop of Rome should be chosen as the universal bishop rather than the minister of Jerusalem, the scriptures have not told us, and there can be no other authority.

9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship: that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

Here we have light again. Peter and James and John are associated as of equal authority in recognizing Paul and Barnabas and their field of labor. And why is James named first, and before Cephas or Peter, if Peter was pope and the highest dignitary in the church? If Peter was pope, then all the authority was in him, and James and John had nothing to say. Nay, if Peter was the universal bishop, then he was bishop over the Gentiles as well as over the Jews. And why did he then acknowledge Paul as having the same jurisdiction over the Gentiles that he had over the Jews?

If Peter knew nothing about his having such jurisdiction, then he did not have it. And there was no pope in the primitive church.

And as the primitive church was the first church, and had no pope, then it follows conclusively that as the Catholic Church has a papal head, she is not the first church, nor the oldest church, but a corrupt church, which has sprung up since, like other heretical sects. See Acts xv. 2, 22, 24. Matt. xxiii. 9; xx. 25.

And it follows also that she has entirely a different organization, and another head than Christ, and teaches a very different system of doctrine, another gospel, she is not a church of Christ at all, but Antichrist. Gal. i. 8, 9.

11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

Peter does not seem here like a rock on which Christ would build his church. Neither did he seem like it when he swore profanely to a falsehood. Matt. xxvi. 72, 74. And yet Christ's promise to him was true in its meaning, which was that he would give the keys to Peter to unlock the gospel dispensation to the Jews as he did on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 1-41, and to the Gentiles, x. 44, 45. All the converts that Peter made were built upon him, as is true of all converts made by other ministers who were all just as much foundation rocks as Peter. But our Lord referred to Peter as opening the church to both Jews and Gentiles. See Eph. ii. 20. In any other respect Peter was not a rock on which the kingdom of Christ was built. Is the church being now in building? On whom is its building proceeding now? Is it on Peter? Who has the keys now? Is it Peter?

If Peter were to be blamed for doing wrong, then Pope Peter was not infallible; or if the pope is infallible, then Peter was not pope. Take either horn of the dilemma and you convict popery of error.

Besides this the decision of the council declaring the pope infallible is illogical, for as the council was not infallible then its decision is only fallible and may be erroneous. It was the prerogative of the pope if he is infallible to declare the dogma.

He promulgated the dogma of the immaculateness of the Virgin in 1854. And he should have pronounced the dogma of his infallibility. If one belonged to him, so also did the other; therefore the decision of the council is incoherent and illogical.

And the whole Catholic Church, council and pope, were ignorant on these points until 1865 and 1870; they can make no pretense to infallibility, or they would always have known both. But they were in darkness and ignorance on both these points until recently; it argues poorly for the pretense of infallibility.

12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

The Lord Jesus did not give him as much endurance and steadfastness as he gave to Paul, who stood firm and became a rock or a hammer to crush Peter.

But Peter in Antioch was out of his jurisdiction and was on

Paul's ground and Paul's jurisdiction. And Paul acted as bishop and reprover over him. For Antioch was the capital of the Greek kings of Syria, and where the first Gentile Church was organized.

13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

Men are much more prone to follow bad examples than good ones. When men give way to evil they know not how far its influence may extend in corrupting society. The only proper and safe way is, "To do no evil," 2 Cor. xiii. 7, but always follow that which is good.

16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.

This must be a truth, or else Christ has died in vain. James himself could not gainsay it. A man that has not good works can not be saved because he is not born again. Neither is there any room for him in heaven, because he is not fitted for heaven. But then he is not justified nor saved for those good works; but only for what Christ has done. Good works are essential to salvation; but no sinner is saved by them, or for them, but only for Christ. Gal. ii. 16. Surely Paul and James are in one mind on the necessity of the works, and on the point that a wicked unsanctified man can not be saved by faith. But a regenerated man is not saved by regeneration, but by faith only. His faith alone secures his salvation; but his faith must not be alone, although nothing else be the ground of his acceptance. He needs holiness to fit him for heaven. James is right, Gal. ii. 14, 17; because an unregenerate and unholy sinner can not be saved by faith, so Paul agrees. Gal. ii. 17.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?

False teachers (Gal. iii. 4) were persuading the Galatians to observe circumcision and the Mosaic law. And many were giving heed to them and in part persuaded, or at least they were perplexed, and Paul wrote this letter to relieve them and as a preventative of apostasy.

Although Christians will never finally fall away and perish, yet the same means must be used as if they could.

10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

We must be careful that we do not put such a construction upon any scripture as shall lead us to seek justification by works, for then we shall be lost. But we ought to believe in good works as evidence of regeneration and qualification to enjoy heaven, but not for a righteousness to take us there.

11. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

This is the gospel, and the apostles all knew it. Gal. iii. 18, 19, 26.

27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

As many as have been regenerated, or baptized by the Holy Ghost, are clothed with the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and made theirs forever. Water baptism can not do this.

28. There is neither Jew nor Greek.

No difference made between them in justification.

29. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

This is the gospel. If men disbelieve it, they must answer at the great day. The promise made to Abraham is, I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. The covenant was with his seed; it embraced his children as well as him, and required them to be circumcised, as well as it required him to be circumcised. Now if any man be in Christ, the promise is to him and to his children equally. So says this gospel.

And the primitive church acted on it and baptized whole households, and this passage explains and confirms it. So does 1 Cor. vii. 14, by showing that if one parent was a believer, the children were eligible to all the privileges. So also does Gal. iii. 7. Those who are of faith are the children of Abraham, having the promise both to them and to their seed.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

These times were not the Sabbath which God had commanded, for an inspired apostle could not object to that. But it was the observance of times that God had not appointed as Easter, Fridays and a thousand others, that they who teach another gospel have appointed to amuse and deceive the simple to their ruin.

30. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Casts out the bondwoman and her son.

All were not equal then civilly, but they were in Abraham's day equally eligible to communion in the church.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

The apostle is teaching and warning them, and therefore he speaks hypothetically, whosoever of you, if there be any who are justified by works, instead of seeking to be justified alone by faith in Christ, such an one is fallen from grace.

17. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye can not do the things that ye would.

When the Christian endeavors to excite holy exercises of submission, love, repentance and trust, he can not; the heart will not obey the will on account of the evil nature that remains in him—when he would do good, evil is done. A Christian can not control the affections of his heart. But yet he will be kept, if he strive believingly and in the end triumph by the force of the Infinite Spirit graciously holding and enabling him. Gal. vi. 9.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

This is an epistle universally addressed to the faithful in Christ Jesus. But where was the pope? Paul seems to occupy the place of universal bishop, without naming Peter, or making any reference to him. He seems to be ignorant of Peter's primacy; and we may believe with good reason, for it did not exist.

¶ The city of Ephesus was the capital of Ionia, a Roman province. It was a Gentile city, and consequently belonged to Paul's jurisdiction as did all the Gentile nations.

10. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.

All that pertains to the kingdom of God are to be gathered in Christ the head. Eph. iii. 15; i. 22.

17. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

John i. 11. Col. ii. 9, 10. James i. 5.

19. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the workings of his mighty power.

The power of God's Almighty grace by the Holy Ghost in turning the hearts and souls of the children of wickedness, to make them the children of holiness and of God, has never been conceived by mortal man.

22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.

If Christ is the head of the church then the pope can not be, unless she has two heads. But she can not serve two masters ; and, therefore, she can not have more than one head or one master or Lord.

CHAPTER II.

20. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

In accordance with the figures of speech in which the scriptures abound, the church is said to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, considering them in their ministerial work as laborers in the Lord's vineyard. The souls converted to Christ are said to be built upon him by whose ministry they have been converted.

The gold, silver, and precious stones are true converts. The wood, hay, stubble, are spurious converts without real piety. We can, therefore, perceive the natural import of Peter as a rock. Matt. xvi. 18. Peter in his ministry with others built in three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost into the church. Thus he was the rock on which the church was figuratively built upon. And then when he was sent for by Cornelius, he built in the Gentiles.

These two instances fulfilled what the Lord promised, when he called him the rock on which he would build his church ; and gave him the keys to open the gospel kingdom to the Jews on the day of Pentecost ; and then afterward open it to Cornelius and the Gentiles, both were built upon Peter or by the exercise of his ministry. Thus the church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The promise to Peter does not appear to have any further reference to him than was fulfilled in these two instances.

21. In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.

Keeping the metaphor, the apostle represents all the building as rising in this manner ; Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone of the holy temple.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 8. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Phil. ii. 3. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 9. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

The lower parts of the earth refer to His burial, or lying in the tomb until the third day. The Apostles' Creed saying, He descended into hell, means the same. So does Psalm xvi. 10.

11, 12. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Here then is the catalogue of the officers or ministers that the Head of the church appointed for its founding and erection under the new dispensation. But among them there is no diocesan, no metropolitans, no archbishops, no popes. He who desires may easily know the truth about these dignitaries.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

So completely is the believer clothed and covered with his heavenly robe of righteousness purchased by Jesus, the Mediator, that he will appear pure, innocent, and spotless before the

throne: his sins, which were innumerable as the sands of the sea, and as red as scarlet, will be as snow, or as wool. And he will be accepted as fully and as freely as if he had never sinned. So wondrous will be the efficacy of the Messiah's atoning blood.

30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

The Mediator so loves his redeemed children, that he takes them into the nearest and most endearing relation to himself, calls them his, makes them as the members of his own body; for they are flesh and blood as his own body was, and he loves them as tenderly and enduringly.

32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and his church.

By alluding to the marital relation and the tenderness of its ties, the apostle is representing Christ and the church.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Children should delight in this obedience, taking great pleasure in it. And it would be of unspeakable advantage to them.

4. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Let the parent avoid compromising his dignity, but be just and affectionate. Impress upon them a sense of moral obligation, and the rich and needed grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.

The terms master and slave are correlative. If some were masters others were slaves. For the sake of euphony or something else, the milder word servant is employed by the inspired writers; slave is used only in two or three instances,

Bond-servant is used more frequently. When such care is shown to conserve slavery and the rights of the master equally with the rights of parents, it is irreverent and impious to make it criminal: it is to impute evil to God. Slaves are to know and feel that in honoring and serving their masters with fear and trembling they are serving Christ.

6. Not with eye-service, as men pleasers: but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

Their heart, and conscience, and soul, must be in the discharge of this duty.

7. With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.

This service is required to be done to men, but not as done only to men. The word only is meant to be supplied; and it is necessary for consistency and truth, as has been shown on Philemon 12, 15, and elsewhere.

9. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

The same things does not mean the same obedience and service; but the duties which equally belong to a master toward his slave.

21. But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things.

The anxiety of some men to support false tenets, and who wrest the scriptures, disbelieving some and perverting others, try to interpret the word all, and the phrases every man, and all men, in an unlimited sense. But this wresting of such scriptures was not included in the all things which this beloved brother was to make known to the Ephesians. The all things in this passage were limited to the subject, and were all things that the Ephesians wished to hear about Paul's affairs in Rome. 1 Cor. xii. 7-11. Heb. ii. 9, 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5, 17; xv. 27. John iv. 39. Num. xvi. 29. Ps. lxiv. 9; lxxxix. 47. Zach. viii. 15. Matt. x. 22. Mark i. 37. Acts iv. 21; xix. 19; xxii. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4. In the exhortation of Paul to Timothy (ii. 1) to offer supplication and to give thanks for all men, are Judas, Ananias and Sapphira to be included? No. 1 John v. 16.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.

Paul and Timothy address this epistle to the whole church, for the saints with the elders or ministers and deacons were all. As they could not have more than one diocesan, their use of the word bishops in the plural number shows that they intended ministers and not diocesans.

6. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

When the Immutable Jehovah begins the good work of grace in the soul of an ungodly man, he never leaves him until he bring him at the day of judgment into the heaven of glory. He lets none fall from grace.

7. Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

The word confirmation is used by the inspired writers in the sense of realizing to us the provisions of gospel grace. But fanatics and corrupters of the gospel who wish to please men by making another gospel that shall be more agreeable to the carnal heart, substitute ritualistic superstitions, saints' days and many other carnal ordinances which the Lord never appointed. They do this because they have no regard for the simplicity and purity of the gospel, nor for the salvation of souls; but only introduce another gospel that shall divert and please carnal men, so that they may become popular with them and obtain their ends. They seem not to care how much

the gospel is perverted, how much God is dishonored, nor how many souls are lost, if they can only become popular and obtain their carnal ends. See Phil. i. 27.

21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Christ was the object of his life; he lived to Christ and for Christ while he lived. Death would bring him the greatest good and far above all the good of this life.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 4. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

As we are to love others as ourselves, we must care for all their interests as we care for our own. We may care for our own things, our own interests, but not for them only; the word only has frequently to be supplied in English to retain the sense. Phil. ii. 21.

6. Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

The form of God is a singular phrase, when we understand that God has no bodily shape or form. But the context shows us clearly that the meaning is, Who being in heaven, and in the situation of God, being situated as God in heaven, came into the world and took the situation of a servant. What a humiliating condescension was this. None was high enough but he to display this wonderful condescension, and none else can have the glory of it. He did it to save lost sinners—theirs the benefit, and his the glory.

25. Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

Epaphras, or Epaphroditus, was a brother minister, who was sent from Philippi to the apostle at Rome with contributions for his relief.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 2. Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

Few they are who seem to be aware of the evil that false doctrine is calculated to produce in corrupting the church and hindering the salvation of souls. Here those who advocated circumcision (called the concision) are compared to dogs, how far from lambs, as they should deserve to be called. In another place, the apostle says, I would they were cut off which trouble you. Gal. v. 12. Again, false teaching is called damnable heresy. 2 Peter ii. 1. How important for us to search until we ascertain and know the truth. John vii. 17. James i. 5.

3. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

We who heartily embrace the gospel are Jews indeed, are circumcised in heart, need not be troubled about the superior pretenses of false teachers.

11. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

That is the state of glory.

12. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.

Not yet was his warfare ended, nor his crown obtained.

18. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

Well may we weep with the apostle that many professed brethren in the church show by their walk (their lives) that they have never been regenerated, but have only a name to live, while they are dead in trespasses and sins, and have nothing in Christ. Prov. xiv. 6, 12, 16, 27, 32. Acts viii. 21.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 3. And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel.

They did not preach the gospel, but promoted the cause of Christ by rendering other aids to those who did preach it, furnishing them food and clothing. Luke viii. 3. Acts xvi. 15.

15. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia.

From this phrase here we can learn that it has different meanings. See Mark i. 1; for this beginning mentioned by the apostle must have been many years, say twenty, after that in Mark. For the vision that called Paul into Macedonia (see Acts xvi. 9) is in the Bible chronology set down at 53 A. D., which is twenty years after the gospel dispensation commenced.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 12. Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

The same saving work in many respects is ascribed to each of the three persons of the Godhead ; for as God is One, there is a concurrence of each person in every divine work. Yet it is never said that the Father or Holy Ghost assumed human nature, or died on the cross, or became Mediator. But in the sense of approbation and concurrence it might be said. So there is a sense in which the same act is ascribed to men and to God. Ps. xvii. 13, 14. Jer. li. 20.

And the moving of David to number Israel is ascribed both to God and to the evil one. 1 Chron. xxi. 1. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. So the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is ascribed to opposite influences. Exod. vii. 3 ; viii. 15. Then again it is said indefinitely that his heart was hardened. Exod. viii. 19.

14. In whom we have redemption through his blood.

Our attention is again called to the inquiry, What was the penalty of the law of Paradise ? Answer : If the blood of Christ's sacrificial death answered the penalty, then death was the penalty. Heb. ix. 22. Rom. v. 6 ; vi. 10 ; viii. 34 ; xiv. 9. 1 Cor. viii. 11 ; xv. 3. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Thess. v. 10. Col. i. 20, 22.

15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.

God has a moral image, an intellectual image, and a divine image. Man was created in the image of God, Gen. i. 26, which may be considered as both his intellectual and moral images. As the Son of God is said to be the express image of the Father's person, we may understand this as referring to his divine image or likeness. The first-born of every creature

means that as a man he is the most illustrious, holds the first place.

16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth.

Then he created all the angels and all the worlds.

17. And he is before all things.

He in His divine nature is thus before all created existences. John viii. 58.

Thus we are compelled to understand his two natures divine and human. Rom. ix. 5. Isa. vii. 14; ix. 6. Luke i. 34, 35.

19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.

This is spoken because of His human nature, for in His divine nature He possessed all fullness eternally.

20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.

All things that are reconciled, as every man has praise of God to whom praise belongs. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

22. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unproveable in his sight.

If this was effected in the body of His flesh through death, then it was that which answered the penalty of the law. If the penalty of the law was something else, then all the scripture would not so uniformly ascribe salvation to Christ's death.

If death were not the penalty annexed to transgression, then we have not been told why Christ suffered it at all.

23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven: whereof I Paul am made a minister.

The commission of ministers was to preach the gospel to every creature. Mark xvi. 15. Paul here refers to this com-

mission, which showed the object of their mission, and not the fact of its performance, except that they preached to all men, acting in the spirit of it by preaching the gospel to every human being to whom they found opportunity to preach it, whether Jew or Gentile.

25. Whereof I am made a minister.

In this verse and the 23d, the Apostle Paul speaks of his general commission to preach the gospel to every creature. If Peter had used this language, the Papists would make capital out of it; but, as it is Paul that uses it, they are quite modest about it, although it clearly proves that Peter was not universal bishop so much even as Paul was. But neither of them was universal bishop, but they were ministers in common.

28. Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that ye may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Every man and all wisdom must be interpreted in a limited sense; for Paul and his brother ministers did not suppose that they could so teach every man in the world, in all wisdom of the sciences, nor so present every man perfect in Christ. But they could show the disposition to do it, and act in the spirit of it.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

This, with verse 9, teaches the infinite perfections of the Son of God, and shows that as the Godhead was in the manhood, the manhood had alliance with it.

11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ

It is perfectly clear that the inspired writer is speaking figuratively of the grace of regeneration, calling it circumcision made without hands.

12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Fanatics can not successfully make capital out of this burial, making it relate to water baptism, because in it they are raised by faith. Now, as in immersion, the subject is not raised by faith, but by the strength of the elder's arms, therefore this passage has no reference to water baptism, but refers to regeneration only, both by circumcision in verse 23, by baptism in this verse, and by planting. Rom. vi. 6. Col. ii. 13, 20.

14. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

The Jewish or legal dispensation was in force during the Lord's ministry, and until fifty days after his resurrection, and then on the day of Pentecost, the gospel dispensation was opened. Gospel baptism was not administered until then.

16. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day.

What God hath not commanded, let no man add to the gospel, as meats, ceremonies, or days, or immersion.

23. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body.

Things which may seem pleasing to men's carnal tastes will destroy the soul as fasts on Friday, observing Christmas and other holy days, entering nunneries, and such will-worship as God has not required, with going down into the water.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

This is a figurative death, a metaphor of death, and shows the duties and privileges that are connected with regeneration, but which are not connected with water baptism.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.

The election of no one can be known to any man but either by revelation from God, or by its fruits in holy living. Therefore, the doctrine of election hinders no one from seeking, using means as in all other things; for they are all alike fixed in the divine mind, in foreknowledge. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning. Acts xv. 18. If a fixed certainty would prevent our using means for salvation, it would equally prevent all use of means.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 18. * * * * but Satan hindered us.

In many instances Satan and wicked men accomplish their wicked purposes, as Judas betrayed the Lord, and the Jews crucified him and stoned Stephen. If the wicked never could accomplish their purposes, they might well become discouraged in a great measure, but they never would desist.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 1. Wherefore when we could no longer forbear.

Could no longer wait without hearing from you. 1 Thess. iii. 5.

2. And sent Timotheus, our brother.

Timothy was not located permanently anywhere. He traveled with Paul generally. He might stay a few weeks, as at Ephesus, on some special occasion. In this instance when Paul sent Timothy away, and left him alone, he mentions it. Almost everywhere we find Timothy uniting with the apostle in the epistles to the churches. This proves what the consciences of those errorists are, who have Timothy, the stated diocesan at Ephesus, and Titus at Crete.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 16. * * * * and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

The dead in Christ shall rise before those who were alive to that time should be changed.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 9. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every man's destiny is fixed. But the wise strive. Luke xiii. 24. Matt. xi. 12; vii. 8. Rom. xi. 7.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.

We observe Timothy not stationed, but itinerating with the apostle.



CHAPTER II.

VERSE 2. That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

That the day of final judgment is near.

3. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

Antichrist must be manifested before the end of the world
So must the Gentile nations first be gathered to Christ, and
after them the Jews. Rom. xi. 25.

13. But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Bound to give thanks, because, if they had not been so chosen or elected before the foundation of the world, they had never been sanctified, nor made believers. 2 Tim. i. 9. Ps. cx. 3. John vi. 37; xv. 5; vi. 65.

15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

During the first age of the gospel the New Testament was not written. The brethren had to treasure up what they heard.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 3. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

The object of Timothy's being left in Ephesus was not the general object of a bishop's charge, to ordain ministers and superintend all the affairs of the church; but to charge some few fanatics and errorists that they preach no other doctrine. Therefore, he was not a diocesan bishop.

Again, he was only besought or requested to remain there for the above purpose. Therefore, he was not a diocesan bishop; for had he been made the diocesan, it would have been his duty to attend to his own charge without any request of the apostle. Who ever heard of a bishop being requested to attend to his own charge? And, again, Timothy's charge there was only temporary: it was only while Paul went into Macedonia; and then it was to terminate. 1 Tim. ii. 14.

As this is not the way bishops are elected and ordained, we know that he was not ordained "The first bishop of Ephesus," as is recorded in the postscript to the second epistle.

7. Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding you.

No minister should teach anything that he does not know.

13. Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Persons are in danger of supposing that this is the positive reason of his obtaining mercy; whereas, it is only the negative reason. Mercy was possible in his case. Whereas, if he had not been ignorant, mercy would have been impossible for him. Heb. x. 26. So that this was not so much the positive

reason why he obtained mercy, as it was the negative reason, or reason why it was not refused him.

The positive reason of his having obtained mercy is also given. 1 Tim. v. 16.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.

The word *all* is here used in its absolute sense, without any limitation, which is unusual.

One reason is assigned in the next verse, viz: that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives.

4. Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

As all men's being saved and coming to the knowledge of the truth, are joined together, and as all men do not come to the knowledge of the truth, we can learn that His will that all men be saved, is not His decreed will, but His will of mercy, His will of benevolence, which is so abundantly taught in the word. "But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Acts xvii. 30. Ezek. xviii. 4; xxxvi. 11-38. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

6. Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

A ransom for all, for all who are redeemed, for all who are to be saved. Such a limitation of a word ought not to be made in interpreting the scriptures if it be not necessary. But if it be necessary to maintain the truth, then no one can object to it. There are a hundred passages that require it. "As I teach everywhere in every church." 1 Cor. iv. 17. Paul did not absolutely teach everywhere, nor in every church. The application can only be made to the places in which he did preach. As if he had said, "As I preach in every place in which I do preach."

This is an important rule of interpretation, for it concerns the truth of the sacred scriptures. We can not doubt but this is what the Holy Ghost intended us to understand by such expressions. So it is said, "And ye shall be hated of all men." Matt. x. 22. If we do not limit this passage to all nations,

we shall not do justice to revelation. 1 John ii. 9, 11. See Mark xi. 32, with Luke ii. 30. And so of many passages, as 1 John v. 19.

11. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

This can not be misrepresented. It may be despised and disobeyed by the wicked ; but it is difficult to imagine how it can be misinterpreted.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 16. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness.

It is true beyond all question that Revelation presents to us many mysteries that can not be solved by either men or angels. The divine existence is the greatest. Others are, the union of the divine, a human nature in the Messiah, the union of our souls with our bodies, the resurrection of our bodies many thousand years after their dissolution ; and John xiv. 9 ; Melchizedek, and those mentioned in this passages, besides many others.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 2. Speaking lies in hypocrisy ; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

Wicked men professing Christianity will, like Judas, betray the Lord of life and glory. They can tell any falsehood, speak all manner of lies in hypocrisy ; for if their conscience be so seared they are past all moral sense. They can pardon sins for money in innumerable instances, and then deny it. They can extort money from the rich by reporting that their friends are in purgatory and need masses to get them out ; when there is no such place as purgatory.

This pretense shows that all such are Antichrist ; for it puts Christ and his propitiation down and of no account. Money and masses deliver souls.

Then such followers of Antichrist have murdered many

millions of saints in persecution, and now deny it. Nothing is too bad for them to do. And then no falsehood is too flagrant for them to assert to cover their guilt. If by their fruits we are to know them, then these fruits show them to a certainty.

10. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.

Here it is evident that it is in some limited sense that God is the Savior of all men; for he is specially the Savior only of those that believe, as it is plainly declared, that he that believeth not shall be condemned.

He is the Savior of all men in the sense of all other nations as well as of the Jews; meaning that the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles being broken down, all men or all nations are alike eligible to salvation, as is often expressed. Rev. v. 9. Rom. i. 5. Matt. xxviii. 19. Acts xiii. 46, 47. 1 Cor. iv. 5. John iii. 3, 5, 17, 19. Acts xiv. 27.

14. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Timothy was ordained to the office of the ministry by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Although in those early days apostles and evangelists could ordain ministers and organize churches. Acts xxi. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 5. Eph. iv. 11. Acts viii. 6, 12, 13.

This agrees with Acts xv. 1, 2, where it is written that the brethren of Antioch having a difficulty to be settled, referred it to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. They knew of no other ecclesiastical authority. There was no diocesan appointed over them, nor over the church at Jerusalem. The government of the church was in the hands of the apostles and elders: they received the reference and acted upon it, giving an authoritative decision. The church of Antioch accepted their decision as authoritative and conclusive. These apostles and elders were really a presbytery; whether they were then called by the name of a presbytery or not, they were one in fact, which is shown by the work they did. This is set down as in the fifty-second year of the Christian era, which was nineteen years after the Pentecost, at which the gospel church was instituted, and the gospel dispensation was inaugurated.

This shows us what was the government in the primitive

church, and settles all questions on that point. If they knew nothing about diocesans and popes, then the Lord had not appointed either of them. And they are both innovations, both corruptions. During the first century the government of the church was Presbyterian.

If the government of the church was then Presbyterian, then it follows that the Presbyterian is now the primitive church as to ecclesiastical government. And if she is orthodox also, then she is the primitive church in all her characteristics. Then it follows also, that the Episcopal and Papal hierarchies are corruptions and characteristics of another gospel. Gal. i. 8. God is not mocked. His institutions in his glorious kingdom of redemption may not be trifled with.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

We may oppose monarchical government in the municipality and in the domestic relation, on the ground of political economy, but to oppose them on moral principles is blasphemy against God, for he has sanctioned both. 1 Sam. viii. 22. Lev. xxv. 46. And in the gospel we see that the same conservative care of this domestic institution, and of the rights of the master is recorded for our light and instruction, and for the peace and purity of the church.

To oppose this domestic relation on moral principle, when divine authority has always approved it, can be nothing else than blasphemy both against God and his doctrine. This is not all, for we are required to teach this view of the subject by warning us that if we teach otherwise we are proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strifes, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth.

We are taught, a wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain to wise counsels. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Prov. i. 5; viii. 33.

The godly have many errors, but they bathe them with repentance, and come to Christ bowing at the footstool that he may wash them by his blood. Thus a prudent man foreseeth

the evil and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished. Prov. xxii. 3.

5. * * * * supposing that gain is godliness.

Gain is not godliness. God makes the privations, afflictions, and inconveniences of his children to work for their good, because he has so covenanted, and because he loves them. He does and will make all things work together for their good. And blessed be his name for the grace. Therefore, he exhorts, "Art thou called being a servant, care not for it." This is good reason for this exhortation, if all things shall work together for their good. Joseph's servitude wrought for his good, raised him next to the throne, and saved his father's family in the famine.

Some one has said, "Blind unbelief is sure to err." 1 Tim. i. 13. Rom. xi. 20. Heb. iii. 12, 19.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Those have only the form of religion and deny the power of it, who instead of teaching men to turn from sin, really encourage them to continue in it, by professing that they can pardon it for money, and that they can raise souls out of purgatory, who are not in Christ, and therefore have died in their sins as unbelievers, and gone with the rich man to misery.

The power of godliness is in the sanctifying work of the Spirit, regenerating sinners, and bringing them to repentance and faith in Christ. Those who instead of this lead men to expect salvation by being in communion with a church that is the most corrupt one on earth, do really or virtually deny the power of godliness. Being in communion with even the true church will not save a soul. The five foolish virgins, although in the church, were lost, as was Simon. Matt. xxv. 1-12. Heb. xii. 14. Gal. vi. 15. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-3, 8. Acts viii. 20, 21.

Again: when any church prohibits marriage to the clergy, or to the nuns, to males or to females, they add to the law of God and inherit the curse. Deut. iv. 2. Rev. xxii. 18. No more evidence is needed. Matt. vii. 20.

We are warned that some men wrest the scriptures to their own destruction. 2 Peter iii. 16. It is not difficult to know who they are. "By their fruits we can easily know them."

8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

Jannes and Jambres are said to have been magicians in Egypt who opposed Moses. Opposition to God and his works of grace and salvation show a person to be greatly hardened and blinded. Elymas the sorcerer, who withstood Paul in instructing Sergius Paulus, showed his officious impertinence. What did he know about the gospel? And what right had he to oppose it? He knew in a few minutes when he was smitten with blindness. Acts xiii. 10.

The wicked unbelieving Jews showed the same ignorant depravity in opposing the Lord Jesus Christ, as if they were better and wiser than he. Such men can be no other than men of corrupt minds.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

At Timothy's conversion the apostle laid his hands on him to give him the Spirit, as was the custom. Acts viii. 17 ; xix. 6. Paul is not alluding to Timothy's ministerial office, but to his personal religion ; for he mentions the unfeigned faith that dwelt in him, in his grandmother Lois, and in his mother Eunice.

This passage then is not parallel with 1 Tim. iv. 14, and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. There can be no discrepancy, for there is no relation between them : they relate to different subjects, one to his personal religion, and the other to his ministerial office.

11. Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Paul was called by Jesus Christ the Lord, and taught by revelation and not by man : Peter was not recognized as having any thing to do with it. Gal. i. 11, 12. Hereby we perceive and know, that Peter was not universal bishop or pastor. It is another gospel, another different church from the primitive church, and with a new papal head unknown to the gospel. Jesus Christ only is the Head of the primitive or gospel church. 1 Cor. xi. 3. Eph. v. 23. Col. i. 18. If Christ be the Head then Peter is not ; else she has two heads, which would make her a monster, being one body with two heads.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 2. Preach the word.

This is the substance of all the commissions of prophets, apostles, and ministers of the gospel; yea, to preach the word—the word of God. Not their own word, the words of men, or the imaginations of men; but the teachings of God's word, and in the sense that he intended it to be taken. And they are to make earnest, humble, and prayerful inquiry to know what is this sense. They may teach the very words of revelation, and yet not preach the sense of it. Isa. xl. 4; lviii. 6. John iii. 5, 6; vii. 36. Ezek. xvii. 2, 3; xiv. 9. Jer. iv. 10; xx. 7. Rom. xiii. 8. 2 Cor. xi. 8; 1 Cor. viii. 11. Gen. iv. 1, 26; vi. 6. Prov. i. 6.

4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

The infidelity and depravity of the wicked are shown in their believing what is not revealed, as in not believing what is revealed. Hence we may have many different sects, while we have only one Bible. Thus we may seem to have much Christianity while we have much infidelity. Prov. xiv. 12. Acts xxvi. 9. 1 Cor. i. 23; viii. 9. The errors of men are some from carelessness, and some from stubborn unbelief. The careful, praying, humble, inquiring soul may hope for preservation from fatal darkness, while the simple pass on to punishment. John vii. 17. Prov. xxii. 3; i. 5, 6; xiv. 15, 18.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 3. But hath in due times manifested his work through preaching, which is committed unto us according to the commandment of God our Savior.

God our Savior is Jesus Christ, who is shown to have given Paul his commission. Gal. i. 12. The Lord Jesus is the Head of the church. He appointed and commissioned Paul directly without the intervention of Peter. Jesus converted or built in Paul without the intervention of Peter, or even naming him. Therefore we see that he did not build his church on Peter only. Eph. ii. 20.

5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.

Titus was not ordained a diocesan to hold a permanent charge, but was left there for a season to finish up the organization of the church in that vicinity, as the apostle had appointed for him to do. The work of disciplining men and organizing them into churches was a work that belonged to all ministers, and particularly to evangelists; such as Philip, Timothy and Titus. Acts xxi. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 5.

14. Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men.

See Com. on 2 Tim. iv. 4.

16. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

If it seem to charity that professors of piety can not be so corrupt, it is a mistake, for some are such. Such are hypocrites and ungodly men—reprobates, rejected as hypocrites. Paul here is in perfect harmony with the epistle of James. A wicked life shows a wicked heart and a dead faith.

If it were not so, how could it have been said by the Lord, Ye shall know them by their fruits. An evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. There is no difference in the doctrine of Paul and James on this or any other doctrine. Matt. xii. 35. Titus iii. 8, 14.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON.



VERSE 15. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever.

In consequence of Onesimus becoming a fugitive and being converted at Rome, he is now willing to return to his owner and to serve him with fidelity while he lives. "Receive him for ever" was during life. Lev. xxv. 46. Paul wanted to retain him to serve him in Rome. But as he was not allowed to covet another man's servant, Exod. xx. 17, he sends him home to his owner that he may receive him for ever. Not now as a servant only, or as a servant or bondsman only, but also a beloved brother. 1 Tim. vi. 2. Paul deemed master and slave as justifiable relations, or he would not have sent back Onesimus to him to serve his master for ever, neither would God by the angel have sent Hagar home to submit herself under the hand of her mistress. Gen xvi. 9.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE HEBREWS.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 6. And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

This proves the Son to be the Almighty and the Eternal God.

8. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.

If the Most High addresses the Son as God, and declares that his throne is for ever and ever, we are safe in saying as much; nay, we are bound to say as much, and to maintain its divine truth.

9. * * * * * above thy fellows.

The Son has companions in worshiping and serving God and in promoting his glorious kingdom. But he has no equal, for he is above them all, in gladness or in the joy and glory of his triumph.

12. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed.

Changed, brought to an end. This end of the world is to be by fire. It is so imbued and defiled with wickedness that this seems to be a suitable end to so corrupt a world as this has become by apostasy, after having been created pure and holy like heaven. 2 Peter iii 10.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

This refers to his race, who were made lords of creation. Gen. ii. 15; ix. 2.

9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The translators should have done better here, and should not have supplied the word man, which is not in the original; the adjective pronoun *for every* is all there is. And the antecedent is to be gathered from the context in the subsequent verse which shows that it should have been *every son*.

Man had honor and glory in his position over the visible creation on earth; but this glory and honor were only in a subordinate degree, for there is a glory that excelleth. 2 Cor. iii. 10. The glory that excelleth is in the God-man, who was perfect and had the divine perfections without measure, or limitation, which proves both his two natures.

11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.

Have the same human nature. See Heb. ii. 14, 16, 17.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

This condition proves that popery is a corruption, and not the primitive church, for Papists promise salvation to such as adhere to popery unto the end; but here we learn that the primitive church held that salvation depended on piety continued unto the end, agreeably to Matt. xxiv. 13. To ground our hope of salvation on the church is a species of idolatry by which many stumble and perish. Simon Magus was a

communicant of the true church, but was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. If men be in the church as the five foolish virgins were, yet they will perish if their hearts are not right. Heb. xii 14, 16, 17. 1 Cor. xiii. 1-8. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Papists make of the church and of communion with it, what the scriptures have never taught. By this we know their error.

What James says is true, that wicked men, as murderers of Protestants for piety, that their wrath worketh not the righteousness of God. He shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy. If a man saith he hath faith and have not works, he is not regenerated, and his faith can not save him. Heb. iii. 17, 18. For such can not have true faith.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.

Not with irreverent boldness as Pharisees, but with meek penitent confidence in the hope of acceptance. Matt. v. 3, 4, 5. Phil. ii. 3. Isa. lxiv. 6. Job xlii. 6.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 5. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest; but he that said unto him.

That is, that appointed Him to the high priesthood—glorified Him.

9. And being made perfect.

It may seem difficult to understand how the divinity should be made perfect, unless it be in his office as Mediator, having all that pertained to it.

11. Of whom we have many things to say.

That is, many things to say of Christ.

14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age.

The doctrines of self-denial, obligations to perfect holiness and divine sovereignty, may be meant by strong meat.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.

To lay again this foundation is to fall away, lose our repentance and our faith. This would be laying a foundation again as it was before conversion. If it be impossible, the impossibility is not in us, nor in the nature of things, but only through grace. And surely the apostle may use means—caution and warn us that these means may be blessed to us to secure our standing. The doctrines of grace do not lead to Antinomianism, nor render means useless.

Let us leave the principles of the gospel as settled, and be entirely established in them, and go on to practical piety; for a firm persuasion of the doctrine is of vast, practical importance; for doctrine is the foundation of practical religion: he that does not believe can not be established. Therefore it is written, "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" "and he that believeth not shall be condemned."

4, 6. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost. * * If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.

Those who are really converted and sanctified, if they fall from grace, never can be converted or renewed again. If they had not had repentance once, there would be no meaning to their being renewed again. Hoping better things of them is no reason against warning them; else the apostle would not have done it.

8. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

How evident is the harmony of this doctrine with that of James.

VERSE 1. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God.

No explanation can remove the mystery that the scriptures have put around this subject. We know that he was king of Salem, and priest of the most high God. Abraham acknowledged his priesthood by giving his tithe of spoils. We know that he was without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.

These paradoxes are not said of his priesthood, but of himself. For in verse eighth, while it is said that the Levitical priests died, it is said that Melchizedek did not die.

9. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

Acknowledging imputation.

10. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

If he was yet in the loins of his father Abraham, then the soul is propagated; and is not a new creation, day by day, as needed; for creation was finished on the sixth day. If this be not so, the doctrine of imputation is made difficult indeed: for if they are new and independent creations, it will be more difficult to see how sin can be imputed.

Another difficulty will arise: the ground for the Sabbath will be swept away. The Sabbath was instituted in commemoration of the finishing of creation; but if souls are still being created daily, then no ground for the Sabbath has yet been laid, nor will be until the last soul is created: then, and not till then, can it be said that the work of creation is finished.

Heresy is fraught with more evil than its abettors are aware of. It would be vastly better to let it all alone before it be meddled with, as the wise man says of contention.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSE 6. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

If the gospel dispensation is superior to the preceding, and is more spiritual, and more edifying, it is humiliating and sor-

rowful that its professed friends show such propensity for carnal things, as instrumental music, and other ritualism. There can be no doubt that, as these carnal things rise in the estimation of the church, spirituality must descend.

True, it is pleaded that Israel had these carnal things; that the Psalmist speaks favorably of the timbrel, the harp, and the organ. But this is not the end of the controversy; for we are taught that the gospel dispensation is distinguished for better things. God gave Israel commandments that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live. Ezek. xx. 25. The gospel does better for us. It is a sorrowful thing that we are turning after the carnal things of the former dispensation, when we know we are blessed with better. When poor erring man goes to select from his own heart, and his own imagination, he is sure to select the worst.

Finding fault with them, he saith, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers." Heb. viii. 8, 9. Now, if that covenant is done away, and superseded by a better, then citations from that covenant of the very things which are disapproved in the gospel, are not relevant, not in point. The reason why they were tolerated then is given. Heb. ix. 8, 10, 11. If the primitive church used no carnal and worldly things in the sanctuary, we are safe in following them; and only them, in this example.

When the angels appeared to the shepherds (Luke ii. 13, 14) we have no mention of instrumental music, but of an angel's song, in correspondence with 1 Cor. xiii. 1; xiv. 7, which seems to condemn such unmeaning pastime in the house of God. If this is a censure, and if there be not a word of encouragement in the gospel for it, we should be satisfied to omit such unmeaning pastime in our devotions.

Singing is sanctioned in gospel-worship. But even singing may occupy too large a proportion of the worship, because the music is pleasing to the carnal mind, when simple evangelical devotion is not so to the carnal.

CHAPTER X.

VERSE 1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year

by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

The reason is given in the third verse, viz : that the blood of animals could not remove sin or guilt. They were offered as types of Christ, whether so understood by the worshiper or not ; for the Lord knew, and he forgave past sins to the believing soul, and saved him ultimately by that believing ; but only for the sake of the offering of Christ, of which that offering of animals was a shadow or type.

2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.

The offering of Christ once performs the whole work of atonement forever to the believer : who needs no more. Of this his conscience is persuaded, as the Israelite was not so persuaded concerning the shadowy offering of the priest. For the Israelite had the same need the next year as before, because those sacrifices did not remove guilt only typically. But when they offered those sacrifices in faith, God imputed their faith to them unto salvation, counting it to them in the room of Christ's sacrifice.

10. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

That is, for all time and forever. There is no more need of any more offering. It was all finished when Jesus died, and said, It is finished. Although the believer has a continual consciousness of indwelling sin, he has no consciousness, as the Israelite had, of the need of any other offering : for this offering of Christ once for all time unto eternity, has forever perfected atonement for him, and purchased his redemption.

It is, therefore, blasphemy to suppose that any priest now repeats the atoning sacrifice of Christ, when he has so finished it forever. But Antichrist wants men to think that they are dependent on him for salvation and redemption.

12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.

This man, the Messiah, having finished his work of humiliation and suffering for sin, has taken his seat in heaven at the right hand of God, to rest from his atoning work, and triumph in his glorious rest ; and to receive the plaudits of the redeemed on his throne when they sing the new song, saying, Worthy art Thou, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us

to God by Thy blood. The work was spoken of as done, not to be done in future, but as done—already accomplished.

We see that when the Lord, with dying breath, said, It is finished, it was finished. He never had to die again, or suffer again : it was forever finished.

14. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

One single offering accomplishes, or perfects forever, the salvation of His people, who are regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, who thereby become united to Him by faith, and become members of His body. Eph. i. 22, 23. Rom. xii. 4, 5. Heb. x. 18.

26. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

Like the unpardonable sin, this brings eternal death. To sin willfully with a dislike to Christ, and thus fall from grace or forsake Christ willfully, with malignant opposition to him, would forever shut the door of mercy. If saints, believing this doctrine, being so taught, and so warned, will never so sin, it will be because they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and not because of their own goodness or their own strength. Ezek. iii. 21.

This is in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave to ministers of his gospel, Whosoever sins ye remit. John xx. 23. They act on it in preaching the gospel; not in sitting in the judgment seat, and doing it judicially.

The apostles show in their practice that this is the way in which they interpreted this commission, for they never attempted to forgive or retain sins in any other way. Ezek. iii. 21; xxxiii. 6.

28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy.

Exod. xxii. 18, 20; xxxi. 14; xxxii. 27. Lev. xxiv. 13-16. Num. xxxv. 30. Ps. cxlv. 9. Isa. xxvii. 11. Guilt demands justice according to the circumstances under which it is committed; therefore gospel-sinners must tremble. If mercy be showed to them it will prove it to be infinite.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSE 12. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead.

Abraham was as good as dead by reason of his wife being past age; not by his own imbecility. Gen. xxv. 1, 2.

27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.

In this one respect he did not fear the wrath of the king; he did not fear to flee, knowing that he might trust in God to protect and deliver him in his flight.

39. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.

The promised Savior.

CHAPTER XII.

VERSE 1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.

We, as well as those enumerated in the foregoing chapter are also encompassed with so great a cloud of martyrs as it is in the original; and should be encouraged to strive with all diligence, and to make all needful sacrifices to obtain the same crown.

14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Without that regeneration and sanctification which lead to a holy life, no man shall see the Lord in peace. The reason is as James says: "Faith without works is dead, being alone." Paul and James are in entire agreement.

It is important to dwell in peace with all men, and to live a life of holiness and clarity, that we be not cast away for our dead faith. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Paul and James agree.

21. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

The apostle was inspired as well as Moses, and could supply what Moses omitted

29. For our God is a consuming fire.†

This is not spoken of the wicked, but of all angels and all men. It witnesses to the purity, the righteousness and majesty of the ineffable Jehovah. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. *Exod. xxiv. 17. Deut. iv. 24.*

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 4. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

They who can set up a king in the church whom God has not set up, but forbidden, *Matt. xx. 25; xxiii. 9*, can with the same sacrilegious assumption forbid marriage to the clergy and nuns; for they show how they are hardened against God and how they arrogate authority to repeal his laws and make laws for themselves that suit them better. But their day of reckoning will come, and they will tremble to meet it.

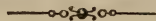
9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

No new or strange doctrine that is not revealed in the scriptures may be received. It is not worthy of a moment's hesitation, but should be at once rejected.

15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise.

The word sacrifice is here used figuratively, not a real sacrifice for propitiation, but a thank offering—the fruit of our lips. There is no real sacrifice for sin, but Jesus Christ.†

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.



CHAPTER I.

VERSE 6. But let him ask in faith.

It is the more important to pay attention to this testimony of this apostle, because some have needlessly feared that he did not entertain the same views of faith with the Apostle Paul.

7. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

No matter how many works he may have to boast of, if he have not faith, he will receive nothing from the Lord; he will only be a Pharisee.

What need have we of anything better from this inspired apostle than is here given?

21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

The ingrafted word of the gospel received with Christian meekness is able to save. This receiving the ingrafted word is faith, is that faith without which it is impossible to please God. Heb. xi. 6.

22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

We perceive here the earnest care of this inspired apostle to guard the brethren against the error of Antinomianism, and to impress upon them the ever-enduring truth, "That without holiness no man shall see the Lord." While faith is the only grace that takes hold of Christ, it must be a living faith, and not a dead faith, not an Antinomian faith. The apostle was led by the Divine Spirit to take these views of the subject for the very important purpose of calling attention to it and laying emphasis upon it, to guard believers against presumption, as Paul was led. Heb. vi. 4.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 14. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? can faith save him?

The apostle does not ask if he has faith can it save him, but if a man only say he hath—only pretend to have faith and have not works that are the proper and necessary fruits of faith—can such a mere pretense of faith save a wicked, ungodly man? The answer is, No. It is like saying to a sufferer, "Be thou warmed and filled, but give him nothing." So faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone, being without fruits, being a dead faith. A fig-tree that never bears fruit is as useless as a dead one. Thus is the apostle sound and orthodox

26. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The body without the soul to animate it is dead, can neither live, breathe, nor act. So it is with a dead faith. But this is not saying a word against the virtue and efficacy of that genuine faith which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

This relates to the age of miracles, when such use of oil was in practice. Mark vi. 13.

15. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick.

The doctrine of the apostles was in unison: they all had the same idea of faith. James does not say that the prayer of works shall save the sick: neither does he say that works will procure the justification of an unbeliever; nor that any one can be justified without faith. But he imputes justification to works. But when he does so, he clearly enough shows how he is to be understood; not as impugning faith, but maintaining the indispensability of piety as well as of faith. Seest

thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect or genuine; for without works it was dead: and a dead faith could not profit any one.

16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another.

If any one has erred, and any brother admonishes him, he must, by all means, confess his error; for this is right in itself, and begets forgiveness and love. But this is a very different thing from going to the priest for absolution. There is no priest in the church now but the High Priest, who only remits sins authoritatively. Presbyters are not priests, but ministers ministering the word; ministerially preaching of remission of sins.

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

The apostles in the commencement of an epistle announced the title of their office, the commission which they bore, which was their claim to regard and obedience. This was their practice. They all conformed to this rule, never departing except in the epistle to the Hebrews, the author of which conformed in other instances, if there were any. Hence we know what office Peter held under Christ, and we know as well what he did not hold. We know that he was only an apostle and nothing more. He was an apostle as others were.

Paul was an apostle of exactly the same grade. And Paul affirms that he was not a whit behind the first or chief of them. 2 Cor. xi. 5. This will satisfy the Christian that none was pope. So easily is the question of popery settled, and so easily is truth known.

Again Paul himself acknowledges the same thing, for he said, "The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me as the gospel of the circumcision was committed unto Peter; for He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was effectual in me to the apostleship of the Gentiles." Gal. ii. 7, 8. The Lord had done as much for Paul toward the Gentiles as he had done for Peter among the Jews. One was no more a pope than the other; neither was over all the church.

Corrupt men have always infested the church and betrayed it into error and corruption. How evident does this appear in the book of Judges. Indeed the church in gospel days has never remained over two or three hundred years without falling away and perverting the gospel. Some small branches, as the Waldenses and Syrian Christians, discovered in India by Dr. Buchanan, have persevered longer in purity. Even in the first century the prophecy of the Lord began to be fulfilled, "Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall

deceive many." Matt. xxiv. 5. And while John lived, he bore testimony to it. Little children, it is the last time ; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists. 1 John ii. 18 ; iv. 3. 2 John 7. And Peter, after his strong profession of fidelity to his Master, denied Him, swearing profanely to the denial. Matt. xxvi. 74. This showed how frail was the rock on which Christ was to build his church. But Christ did fulfill his promise by using Peter's ministry on two occasions, one at Pentecost in bringing in Jewish converts, and the other in the house of Cornelius in bringing in the Gentiles. In these two instances Peter fulfilled what the Lord said of his being a rock on which he would build his church ; he does build it upon the foundation of prophets and apostles. Eph. ii. 20. Peter, having the spirit of prophecy, could know what was meant by his being a rock, and the church being built on so frail a creature as he was, although precipitate, rash and ready to promise fidelity to Christ, yet exceeding Judas in denying him. By his rashness and presumption, his Master has to reprove him with, "Get thee behind me, Satan : thou art an offense unto me." And twenty years later than this, when he had more experience, he dissembled about eating with Gentiles. Gal. ii. 12. This was the introduction of a schism that might have been very destructive if Paul had not been there to destroy it in the bud ; for Barnabas and other Jews were carried away with it, and united with Peter in the heresy. Satan and the gates of hell were easily prevailing against him, and making him a ringleader of corruption. But in the second century, when there was no Paul nor John to be a barrier against error, New Platonics, under the patronage of Ammonius Saccus, who was a popular teacher at Alexandria, were adopted into the Christian Church.

"Jesus, our Savior, prescribed one and the same rule of life or duty to all disciples. But the Christian doctors, either by too great a desire of imitating the nations among whom they lived, or from a natural propensity to austerity and gloom, were induced to maintain that Christ had prescribed a twofold rule of holiness and virtue ; the one lower, the other higher, one for men of business and one for men of leisure. They gave to the first the name of precepts and to the other the name of counsels, the latter being for such only as aspire to superior holiness and a closer union with God. The causes of this corruption of the gospel are at hand. First, the Christians did not like to appear inferior to the Greeks and Romans and the other people, among whom there were many philosophers and sages who were distinguished from the vulgar by their dress and their whole mode of life, and who were held in

high honor. Now among these philosophers none better pleased the Christians than the Platonists and Pythagoreans.

"To this great error of the Christians may be added another, not indeed of equal extent, but a pernicious one and productive of many evils. The Platonists and Pythagoreans deemed it not only lawful but commendable to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety." This extract is from Mosheim's *Eccl. Hist.* Vol. I. pp. 128, 130.

Here we see how early the rank weeds of apostasy sprung up in the primitive church. Although the apostasy was not total at first, yet it was as real as if it had been total. They imputed these two grades of Christianity to the appointment of the Lord himself when they were entirely their own invention.

This was a forsaking of Christ and a denial of him as their King and Lawgiver. And although they professed to make these grades by his authority, they were their own inventions and purely for their own purposes. They were therefore two steps taken in apostasy. The second step in which they declared it "not only lawful but commendable to deceive and lie for the sake of truth and piety," proves that the previous or first step was the point of apostasy and had already accomplished their fall.

The apostasy of the primitive church was continually going on from one plunge to another. They left nothing as they found it; if they did not abolish in form the doctrine of the Trinity, and the duty of the eucharist, and the sacrament of baptism, they associated with them such errors as rendered them inoperative.

Instead of repentance, faith and regeneration and the blood of Christ, they held with Bardesanes and Tatian, that to subdue our depraved nature and free ourselves from the bondage of vicious matter, we must use abstinence, meditation and fasting. That this is what Jesus came for. And that whosoever should thus practice this self-denial, abstinence and mortification should be saved. The propitiation of Christ, the pardon of sin, and the sanctification of the Spirit are either entirely neglected, or so encumbered as to lose their significance and their effect.

Tatian denied that Jesus Christ had a real body, and corrupted Christianity with other doctrines of the Oriental philosophers. Tatian's followers were numerous, and were sometimes called Tatiani, or Tatianists; but more frequently they were designated by names indicative of their austere morals. Tatian was a disciple of Justin Martyr. His followers discarded all the external comforts and conveniences

of life, and holding wine in abhorrence, used only water in the Lord's supper. See Mosheim I. 142. They generally considered Christ our Savior as consisting of two persons, the man Jesus, and the Son of God, or Christ; the latter they supposed entered into Jesus the man, when he was baptized by John in the Jordan, and parted from him when he was made a prisoner by the Jews.

"Among the Egyptian Gnostics the first place is commonly assigned to Basilides, of Alexandria. He maintained that the Supreme and All-perfect God produced from himself seven most excellent beings or *Æons*. Two of these *Æons*, viz: *Dynamis* and *Soppia* (power and wisdom) procreated the angels of the highest order. Those angels built for themselves a residence or heaven, and produced other angels of a nature a little inferior. Other generations of angels succeeded, and other heavens were built, until there were three hundred and sixty-five heavens, and as many orders of angels. The inhabitants of the lowest heaven, contiguous to eternal matter, which is an animated and malignant substance, formed a design of constructing a world out of that disorderly mass, and of fabricating men. God approved of the work when it was finished, and imparted rational souls to the men whom the angels had formed. The prince of those angels chose the Jewish nation for his subjects, and he gave them a law by Moses. The other angels presided over other nations." p. 143.

"The angels who created and governed the world, gradually became corrupt; and they not only labored to obliterate the knowledge of the Supreme God, in order that they might themselves be worshiped as gods, but they waged war with each other for the enlargement of their respective territories. The most arrogant and restless of them all was he who governed the Jewish nation. Therefore the Supreme God sent down from heaven his Son, or the Prince of the *Æonians*, whose name is (*Nous*, mind) Christ, that he might restore the lost knowledge of the Father, overturn the empire of the angels who governed the world, and especially of the insolent Lord of the Jews. The God of the Jews perceiving this, ordered his subjects to seize Jesus and put him to death. The estimation in which human learning should be held was a question on which Christians were about equally divided; but finally the party in favor of human science and Gnosticism prevailed. To this issue Origen contributed very much. And the greater the influence of this man, which quickly spread over the whole Christian world, the more readily was his method of explaining the sacred doctrines propagated." Mosheim I. pp. 143-162.

"The Architect of the Universe gradually became so inflated that he either thought himself to be, or at least wished men to so regard him, as the only God; and by his prophets, whom he sent among the Jews, he arrogated to himself the honors of the Supreme God. And herein the other angels, who presided over parts of the created universe, imitated his example. To repress this insolence of Demiurgus, and to imbue souls with a knowledge of the true God, Christ descended, being composed of an animal and spiritual substance, and, moreover, clothed with an etherial body. He passed through the body of Mary, just as water through a canal; and to him Jesus, one of the highest Æons, joined himself, when he was baptized in the Jordan by John. The Architect of the World, who perceived that his dominion would be shaken by this divine man, caused him to be seized and crucified. But before Christ came to execution, not only Jesus the Son of God, but also the rational soul, forsook him; so that only his sentient soul and his etherial body were suspended on the cross." Mosheim I. p. 146.

"Lucifer and his little company would have no intercourse with the bishops who joined themselves to the Arians, nor with those who had absolved these bishops after confessing their fault; and thus they renounced the whole church.

"About the same time Ærius, a presbyter (not Arius), a monk and Samaritan, rent Arminia, Pontus and Cappadocia by opinions wide of those commonly received. First, he maintained that bishops had *jure divino*, no rights above presbyters. In the next place, he disapproved of prayers for the dead, the stated fasts, the celebrations of Easter, and other things which most persons regarded as the soul of religion. He seems to have aimed to restore religion to its primitive simplicity.

"There were various persons of this sort in the fourth century, who were disgusted with the progress of superstition and of errors respecting the true nature of religion, and who opposed the general current; but the only fruit of their labor was, that they were branded with infamy. Eminent among them was Jovian, an Italian monk, who taught first at Rome, and then at Milan, near the close of the fourth century. These sentiments were first condemned by the Church of Rome, and then by Ambrose, in a council held at Milan, in A. D. 390. The Emperor Honorius enacted penal laws against persons holding such sentiments, and Jovian he banished to the Island of Boa." Vol. I. p. 274.

It will now be proper to stop and inquire if the church had become so perverted as to believe that celibacy and macerat-

ing the body by fasting, were more acceptable to God than real piety in common life, had she not apostatized. Had not the gates of hell prevailed against her? If she persecuted the brethren by banishment and the sword, was she not a fallen church? Gal. i. 6-9; iv. 29. If the seven churches of Asia, or any one of them, fell into apostasy and corruption, then the gates of hell had prevailed so far against the church. If the church, in general, in this fourth century had so fallen, as Mosheim states, and persecuted the orthodox for speaking in favor of orthodoxy, then the gates of hell had prevailed against her. Deut. xxviii. 20.

Judah had not gone into captivity like Ephraim if she had not forsaken the Lord. 1 Kings xix. 10. 2 Kings xxii. 17. 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. But this does not violate the promise of the Lord, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church: for they ceased to be his church who had forsaken him, and were given over to Satan, and to a reprobate mind. 2 Thess. ii. 11. 1 Tim. i. 20. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 2 Chron. xv. 2.

The primitive church in the second century cast off the yoke of Christ, and chose in part a new master and lawgiver, and became the disciples of Christ and of Plato. In doing so they grieved his Holy Spirit: for he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to given images. Isa. xlii. 8. God is a jealous God. He will not accept of divided worship. We can not serve two masters. During the whole of the second century the church was departing more and more from Christ, by perverting and corrupting his gospel, mixing it with Gnosticism, and other pagan notions and customs, until it became, in the fourth century, another gospel; for she approved of lying and fraud for the promotion of a good cause. And this in the face of divine authority. Rom. iii. 8. The revealed will of God taught them that marriage was honorable and lawful to all men and women; but they impudently taught the contrary by dishonoring it, making it injurious to holiness, and unlawful for ministers and nuns. Thus setting themselves above God, enacting laws contrary to his. And for hundreds of years they were continually laying popish and infidel deeper and wider, until the true principles of the gospel were either entirely abandoned or so covered and put in the background as to become completely inoperative; until, in reality, another gospel was substituted, and the curse brought upon them declared. Gal. i. 18. And it is written, "For this cause God shall send upon them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness."

2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Thus for a thousand years they have continued under the ban of this terrible judgment, and departing more and more from the pure gospel, by pardoning sin, getting souls out of purgatory without Christ's righteousness, but by the influence of the priests, when these souls have died without Christ, thus teaching their deceived followers to believe more in them than in the Savior. Further, they lower the salvation of Christ by instituting works of supererogation, and putting them along with the atonement of Christ in procuring salvation.

They in part, at least, repudiate Christ, who is the only Head of the church, by making another head with equal power and jurisdiction, and thus exhibiting Antichrist.

And it has become obvious that the Holy Spirit has forsaken this apostate church, so that in Germany, in A. D. 1517, God raised up one man to oppose these abominations, and gave him success in converting many millions back to the principles of the primitive church.

Here it was evident that the Papists had forsaken God, and that, therefore, he forsook them. 2 Chron. xv. 2.

If any more evidence were needful it is furnished in the malevolent spirit of the Papists, who were as cruel and bitter in persecuting Christians, by the Inquisition, as ever were the Jews or the pagans. Gal. iv. 29. This persecution, practiced for centuries, proved that they had not the Spirit of Christ, and therefore were none of his. Luke xxiii. 34. Mark xi. 26. John viii. 47; x. 4, 5, 26.

In the instructions of our Lord to his disciples he never said a word about the duty of making confession to priests, nor the duty of making diocesan rulers, nor about the duty of putting up a head or king over his church, but he forbade them. Matt. xx: 25; xxiii. 9. That Papists set up and maintain both bishops and popes is a clear evidence of Antichrist; they show that they consider themselves above God.

If the Lord said, "On this rock I will build my church and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," the interpretation must appear in Peter's life and his epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. If no such thing as Papists claim appears in the history, then their claims and pretensions are preposterous and false. This is a simple and unerring method of testing their claims and pretensions, else how can the word be true that by their fruits ye shall know them? The object of this long note is to prepare the reader for the study of these epistles of Peter; for surely if he held the popedom we would expect that the fact would appear in these epistles, and if it does not so appear, nor in the Acts of the Apostles, then

it must follow irresistibly that the apostle did not know that he held the office. And if he did not know it, then it could not be a fact that he so held it; and it is an imposition palmed upon the ignorant in later times in the face of all history, which clearly shows that there was no pope for four centuries, but in the fourth century there began to be a controversy among the three principal and most prominent bishops for the first place. But this proved their pride, ambition and infidelity, and showed their impiety, for it was in open opposition to revelation. Matt. xx. 25; xxiii. 9. If by their fruits we may know them, and if Christ's sheep hear his voice and follow him, then this erring and corrupt communion was no longer the church of Christ, because they had forsaken him and continue to this day in the same contumacy. And all who would flee out of Sodom to avoid its destruction must hasten their escape from popery in conformity with Revelation xviii. 4.

Not only is there no shadow of popery in these epistles, but even down to the fourth century there was no pope, neither down to the fifth was there any; but only an increasing ambition and strife among five or six contestants who were denominated patriarchs, and who had great prerogatives, as the consecration of bishops in their respective provinces, the calling of councils to settle ecclesiastical affairs, etc. But originally all bishops and presbyters were the same officer. In the third century, however, the bishops were higher than presbyters, yet they were all of one grade only, except by courtesy. "For while the ancient mode of church government remained there was a gradual deflexion from the rules and an approximation toward the form of a monarchy. For the bishops claimed much higher authority and power than before, and encroached more and more upon the right, not only of the brotherhood, but also of the presbyters." Mosheim I. 164, 325.

Now it follows that if neither popery nor diocesan episcopacy existed in the primitive church, but have been insinuated by unprincipled and ambitious men then they are errors, heresies and nothing but corruptions, and ought not to have the countenance or support of any one that fears God or loves the truth.

"To these evils must be added the rivalry and ambition of the patriarchs themselves, which gave birth to abominable crimes and the most destructive wars." Mosheim I. 325.

Although these expositions seem to be more than sufficient to establish the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church, yet there is more.

"Genuine piety was supplanted by a long train of superstitious observances, which originated partly from opinions inconsiderately embraced, partly from a preposterous disposition to adopt profane rites and combine them with religious worship, and partly from the natural predilection of mankind in general for a splendid and ostentatious religion. Further, the public supplications by which the pagans were accustomed to appease their gods were borrowed from them, and were celebrated in many places with great pomp. To the temples, to water consecrated in due form, and to the images of holy men, the same efficacy was ascribed, and the same privileges assigned as had been attributed to the pagan temples, statues and lustrations before the advent of Christ. And shameful as it may appear, the worship of martyrs was modeled by degrees into conformity with the worship which the pagans had in former times paid to their gods." Mosheim I. 260.

If such idolatry shows apostasy, then is the Roman Catholic Church an apostate church.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 17. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

As Jesus was a king, he demands appropriate honor from creatures, and directed that the subjects of Cæsar render to him his due. But we are here required to honor all men. As man bears the image of God, that image must be entitled to respect.

18. Servants, be ye subject to your masters with all fear.

If civil rulers must be obeyed, domestic must ; for if a king have authority, a father and a master must also.

24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.

Believers having so great a benefit by the Savior should out of gratitude and love for their deliverance from sin and from its destructive power, live unto God, be devoted to him, and to his service,

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 6. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well.

Christianity requires humility, a tender conscience, and the fear of God. It is well for a nation whose political principles do not nullify and destroy piety; for with too many political principles are supreme, and put religion in the background. This is always an attendant of apostasy and unbelief. Acts xxvi. 9. How easily may impenitent persons be known by their fruits? Do men have the fear of God so before their eyes, and his law so written in their hearts, that they reverence God and regard his word on slavery and family discipline, or do they exhibit infidelity and unbelief?

19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

Noah was a prophet and a preacher of righteousness, and while the ark was being built he preached to the antediluvians, when spirits were then in their bodies, but now are in the prison of eternal death. All men are not saved.

21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.)

Washing the body does no good; but to have our conscience clear is necessary to comfort. As baptism is a divine ordinance, it can not be omitted without open sin against God. Saved by water. The like figure of being saved by water. This is figurative language, for the water of baptism is only a figure of salvation by Christ. Eph. v. 26. Heb. xii. 24.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 1. For as much then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourself likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.

He that hath suffered with the same motive that Christ did, hath ceased to be under the dominion of sin.

11. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

The scriptures are given us as the rule of every man's life and of every man's teaching. How easily may those be known by their fruits who persecute those who teach according to the pure word of God on the subject of slavery and other things.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder.

Here the inspired apostle speaks of his official standing and position. And he only claims the office and rank of a presbyter or elder, but does not here nor anywhere else give us any hint of his popedom, neither does Paul in any of his epistles, neither does Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. If no scripture mentions the setting up of one apostle as a pope, nor of any one acting as pope, then popery can not be sustained. And diocesan episcopacy fares no better; for the apostle charges presbyters in the next verse to do the work of bishops.

2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.

Now it is perfectly obvious that if presbyters had the episcopate over their flocks then there were no other diocesans over them. This is also fully sustained by the Apostle Paul to the elders of Ephesus who held the episcopal office over their parishes by the authority of God, Acts xx. 28; for in the original it is said over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops. How Episcopalians can so perseveringly condemn the divine light and authority, it is difficult to imagine and fearful to contemplate.

3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage.

Peter here eschews popery; for it is incredible that he should so shame and condemn himself if he were God's viceroy on earth and had rule over the church, that he should revile his own office and so criminate himself.

THE SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 19. We have also a more sure word of prophesy.

We have also a prophesy, that is, of the more sure and reliable kind as that was : not that one is any more sure than the other, for both alike are of the more sure kind.

20. Knowing this first, that no prophesy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

The scriptures are open to all men, that all may know and understand them, and receive their instruction, flee from the wrath to come by repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. He will understand them best who is most conversant with the sound rules of their exegesis, has an honest heart, and is taught of God.

"Another source of error was the philosophy of the Greeks, of which Burton remarks, that it became more fatal to the souls of men than the sword of persecution.* Allusion is made to this in 2 Tim. 15-17. Col. ii. 8. "The two principal subjects on which they speculated were the origin of evil and the person of Christ."

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.

False prophets and false teachers are one of the greatest calamities with which the church is afflicted. We are warned

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against them. Be not deceived; let no man deceive you. Every man is responsible, the teacher to ascertain what is true before he teaches it for truth, and the hearer before he receives it, lest both be destroyed. Matt. xv. 14.

4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned.

The sovereignty of God is a high and glorious subject: he has mercy on whom he will. But this only concerns the lost men and angels who are condemned criminals—already guilty. Adam's race, like the fallen angels, are already lost and condemned. John iii. 18. Every fallen man, before he is regenerated, is just in the same lost condition that the fallen angels are in—*i. e.*, under condemnation. Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost—lost already under condemnation. Although fallen angels and fallen men are under condemnation and lost, yet some fallen men will be renewed, pardoned and saved by Christ: yet there is no such grace for fallen angels—they must perish.

5. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.

How bright does the judgment and justice of God shine in his saving only eight persons from the flood and destroying all millions besides of that generation. Also in saving only Lot and part of his family. How evidently true and solemn is that scripture, "For our God is a consuming fire." Heb. xii. 29.

CHAPTER III.

15. And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.

The apostles are all named and numbered, and many of the presbyters and lower officers are also named and commanded: but how strange that the highest officer of the church—the pope—is never mentioned. If there were such a dignitary, the fact that he is never designated is strange indeed. If there were no such, then it is natural, reasonable.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

How great is the consolation, that the frail and humble Christian who is always striving against sin, and still finds it tarnishing everything he does, has a prevalent advocate with the Father.

2. And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The sins of believers are the subject of the apostle's discourse. He addresses believers by the tender and paternal appellative, "My little children," and encourages them with the assurance that we (Christians, believers) have an advocate with the Father. He is not speaking of unbelievers. When he says : "If any man sin," he is not digressing from his subject. In the fourth verse he says : "And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." And in verse seven : "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." i. 3, 4, 7. These things do not belong to unbelievers, but they belong to believers throughout the whole world.

3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

This proves that the writer is not digressing from his subject.

12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Applicable to believers only.

19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

Like Simon, Acts viii. 13, 21, they had professed religion, but like the stony ground and thorny-ground hearers, they

never brought forth any real fruit of love, faith or repentance, and therefore they fell away, as they naturally would, for they had the character of Antichrist. See v. 18. No one who has been born again will ever forsake Christ, or fall away from grace. See vs. 25, 27 ; iii. 6, 9, 10.

CHAPTER IV.

VERSE 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Try the spirit of the teachers, and confide only in such as bear the fruits of real piety ; for by their fruits ye shall know them. Do they fear God, reverence the sanctuary, sanctify the Lord's day, and show regard for souls and for truth, and warn the wicked? Isa. viii. 20 ; lviii. 13.

19. We love him, because he first loved us.

The motive of our love to God is the glorious perfections of his character. The cause of our love is that he first so loved this wicked world as to give and send his only begotten Son to work redemption for the lost. If he had not thus provided redemption, and sent also his Spirit to make us willing in the day of his power, we had never been brought to love him. This, then, is not so much the motive of our love to God as the efficient cause of it. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Verses 9, 10.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

The first clause of this verse, like chap. iv. 2, will be difficult if we do not let scripture interpret them ; for devils believe and tremble, and demons and wicked men have owned Jesus Christ to be the Son of God without being born of God. But on referring to Rom. x. 9, 10, and discovering that the

heart is the active faculty in this confessing and believing, both passages become clear.

3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

If it is the nature of true love to God to keep his commandments, and that they be not grievous, not a burden, not a yoke, but a pleasure, then Paul and James may be easily made coincident; for faith without works will not justify us, but must be dead, being alone, and of no account.

5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

The same faith that worketh by love.

6. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

As blood refers to the blood which Christ shed, and not the blood of ceremonies or types, it is agreeable to analogy to suppose that the water also refers to the water that he shed when pierced with a spear. It is not suitable to suppose that water refers to the water of baptism, which was not appointed until after his resurrection. The sacrament of baptism, by water, was never named by him during his whole ministry, and is not here referred to. As water cleanses, it is a suitable emblem of sanctification; and as the blood of atonement, which issued from his wounds, had efficacy which the blood of other sacrifices had not, so likewise the water from his pierced side would have a significance beyond ceremonial washings.

And the Holy Ghost is an authoritative witness to divine things, by miracles and revelation; and called truth, because there is such a perfect alliance between him and truth: just as God is called love. 1 John iv. 16. And as for his strict justice and of the brightness of his glory, he is called consuming fire.

7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

So much opposition has been made to this conclusive passage, that some have agreed to drop it and cease from using it. But if it be a part of the divine code no one can neglect it without treachery to its authority. If it be authoritative, as

it appears certainly to be, it ought not to be betrayed to its enemies.

The great objections that are alleged against it are its being wanting in so many manuscripts, and its having been omitted in the first two editions of Erasmus' Greek Testament. But there is no weight in these objections.

It is a conceded rule that age is a very important criterion in determining the authority of manuscripts. If it be so, then this passage may be wanting in modern manuscripts without impairing its authenticity; for they are modern, and do not reach back as history does, to the early existence of this passage. No manuscript is as early as the fourth century, when Jerome vouched for the authenticity of this passage, inserted it in the Vulgate, and inserted it in his Confession of Faith. As Jerome lived within the fourth century, he had opportunity of knowing what the church believed about the authenticity of this passage. Previous to the sixteenth century, when Erasmus left this passage out of the first two editions of his Greek Testament, its authenticity had never been called into question. It had, for more than a thousand years, been silently omitted in transcribing manuscripts; but its authority was not disputed. But Erasmus made amends for this by so far conceding his error as to insert it in his third edition.

The silent omission of so marked a passage, in the fourth and fifth centuries, when Arianism had greatly the ascendancy in the church, and could multiply manuscripts of a character to suit themselves, need not excite any wonder.

All the evidence adduced against this passage by its opponents is only negative—it has been omitted in copying manuscripts. But if the preponderance of Arianism in the fourth and fifth centuries show how this omission may be accounted for, then the authenticity of the passage is not diminished.

But what seems most conclusive on this point is the conceded fact that the Italic version of the New Testament—the Protocol—made in the first century, has always contained it. This Protocol was made while the author was yet alive. If no manuscript now on earth contains it, the fact proves nothing. If the Italic version contained it, then it was in the autograph of the apostle; and then the church has ample authority for the general estimation in which it is now held. And this Italic version was used in all the Latin churches in Europe, Asia and Africa, for many centuries after the death of the Apostle John. But there were copies of the Italic version in Africa used by other than Latin churches in which this verse was wanting, which plainly enough shows where the blame lies. A church could silently omit it without its oc-

casioning inquiry, but an interpolation; and while the autograph of the apostle was extant, would be impossible on many accounts.

The testimony of the church in settling the canonical books of the scriptures has been deemed conclusive. And why should it not be so in settling the authenticity of this passage?

The Council of Lateran, held at Rome A. D. 1215, composed of two thousand bishops, inferior clergy and deputies, recorded in their minutes: "It is read in the Canonical Epistle of St. John that there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one."

In the eighth century the Emperor Charlemagne called together the learned of that age, instructing them to revise the manuscripts of the Bible. To effect this purpose he furnished them with every manuscript that could be found in his extensive dominions. In their correctorium the testimony of the three heavenly witnesses is read without the smallest impeachment of its authenticity.

In favor of the authenticity of this passage, it is admitted that it has appeared in some editions of the Peshito, which was like the Italic or Latin version, made in the first century. Also it has appeared in the Clementine editions of the Vulgate, in the complutension of the Greek, and in the common texts of Stephens, Beza and Elzevir; in the Codex Ravianus, at Berlin. It stands also in the Confession of Faith of the Greek Church, and in their liturgy. The ancient version of the New Testament, in the Armenian language, contains it.

Hear Mr. Travis: "In the Latin, or Western Church, the suffrages of Tertullian and Cyprian, of Marcus Caledensis and Phabadius, in its favor, aided by the early, the solemn public appeal to its authority by the African bishops under Humeric; the preface, Bible, and *Conscripta fides* of Jerome; the frequent and direct citations of the verse by Eucherius, Augustine, Fulgentius, Virgilius and Cassiodorius: these supported, as to the Greek or Eastern churches, by the dialogue between Arius and Athanasius, as well as by the synopsis of this Epistle—by the Armenian version, which was framed from Greek manuscripts, by the very early and constant use of Apostolos in the same Greek Church, and by its public Confession of Faith. All these evidences arising in the sixth century, to pass over the immense accumulation of testimony which has been produced subsequently to that era, offering themselves to the test of judgment, combined in one point of view, unchecked by a single negation, unrebuked by any posi-

tive contradiction, unresisted by the smallest impeachment of the authenticity of the verse, throughout all the annals of all antiquity: all these circumstances seize the mind, as it were, by violence, and compel it to acknowledge the verity—the original existence of the verse in question.” Travis’ Works, pp. 344, 346.

Hear another witness: “Concerning this text there has been a dispute whether it be genuine or not. It is objected that some of the Fathers did not quote it. But what then? Others did, and a sufficient number of them to prove it genuine. It is quoted by Fulgentius against the Arians in the beginning of the sixth century, without the least scruple or hesitation. It is found in Jerome’s translation, which was made near the close of the fourth century. It was quoted by Athanasius, about the fourth, and by Cyprian about the middle of the third century. It is manifestly referred to by Tertullian in the beginning of the third, and by Clemens of Alexandria, toward the close of the second century. Thus it is to be traced up to within one hundred years, or less, of the time when the Epistle was written.” Gill’s Body of Divinity, Vol. I. p. 198.

The Rev. Caleb Alexander says, in the Appendix of his Essay on the Deity of Christ: “We are very happy that it is in our power, by very direct and peremptory testimonies, to establish the originality and authenticity of this disputed passage. For these testimonies we are indebted to the judicious and learned works of the Rev. George Travis, A. M., Prebendary and Vicar of Eastham, who, in his letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq., has rescued this text from the hands of its adversaries, and conferred on the church an obligation of the liveliest gratitude and love.” David Harrower, p. 48.

This passage of the divine oracles may be relied upon and quoted with the most entire confidence.

The external evidence is so satisfactory and conclusive that the internal evidence, which is also entirely conclusive, has been omitted here.

18. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.

He does not live in the indulgence of unrestrained sin, as the impenitent do. Job ix. 2. Prov. xx. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. 2 Chron. vi. 36.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.



VERSE 10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not.

Every Christian is supposed to know the truth and to maintain it, and give no countenance to error and false doctrine.
3 John 4. Jude 10, 18.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.



There has been so much written upon the Book of Revelation, that the writer of these comments does not feel called upon to comment extensively upon it.

CHAPTER I.

VERSE 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.

If it is the Lord's day we should not rob him of it, but devote it sacredly to his service in prayer, worship, and devout meditation, praise, blessing his name, giving thanks to him, and thus devote the whole of its sacred hours to him. Exod. xx. 8, 9, 10. Isa. lviii. 13. Luke xxiii. 56.

Some commentators have professed to be at a loss for the meaning of Lord's day. Rev. i. 10. But this is quite needless, when so many parallel passages are given which make it plain.

In Genesis ii. 2, 3, the Sabbath is set apart for our holy resting on that day.

In conformity with this it is written, Exod. xxxv. 2, 3, "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord." This proves it to be the Lord's day, as does the second commandment. Exod. ii. 9-11. Isa. lvi. 4. The Lord called it his day, "Unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths." This shows it to be the Lord's day. And Isa. lviii. 13: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day." This shows it to be the Lord's day, and his *holy day*.

CHAPTER II.

VERSE 4. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

They were not as ardent in their devotions as they were at first. Like Martha, they were worldly, and taken up with many things that were not needful, when they ought to have grown in grace, been more diligent, and been more ardent, more penitent and more believing.

5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.

That they had not fallen from grace is clear from the third verse—that they had labored in the Master's cause, and had not fainted in it. Relaxing in zeal and ardor may be called falling, when it means only, in a measure, only becoming less ardent, which should be guarded against as very wrong and very injurious.

14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.

If they gave any countenance, and did not lift up their voice like a trumpet, cry aloud and spare not, their inaction would be blamable. So in the twentieth verse, they of Thyatira suffered that woman Jezebel to teach, and to seduce the servants of the Lord.

CHAPTER III.

VERSE 8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.

This is affirmed of the children of God, and suggests their obligation to improve their privileges.

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie.

It is a very wicked profession for men to profess to be what they are not in divine and sacred things. God is not mocked. He will not be trifled with. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. Acts v. 3-5.

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.

Knowing the dangers and trials to which we are liable should excite our watchfulness and prayer, that we may not touch the unclean thing; that we may stand fast; and having done all, to stand. Phil. i. 27. Eph. vi. 13. We may have confidence in God to keep us and deliver us if our faith and confidence be constantly directed to him through Christ Jesus, who is our righteousness.

20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

This is addressed to the children of God who are in covenant with him, and who are in his Son, the Lord and Savior.

CHAPTER V.

VERSE 9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred.

Sometimes what is here said *out of every kindred*, is sometimes said of all men, when the meaning is the same. As: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Men of all nations, as well as Jews.

12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

If the Lord Jesus receive such worship and glory in heaven, is it not unreasonable that any here should doubt his being the Almighty God?

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Some men are very particular that some passages, like those that speak of all men, and every creature, and every man, be

taken literally. But it is sorrowful to observe their inconsistency in their treatment of other passages which treat of election and divine sovereignty, illustrating their want of sincerity and truth. Preach the gospel to every creature. If this be taken literally, it must be preached to sheep and oxen. And so of this passage; if every creature thus glorifies and thus worships God, it not only supposes animals to use the language, but trees and rocks to speak also. To torture figurative language shows irreverence, as Matt. xxvi. 26. 1 Cor. xii. 7.

14. And the four beasts said, Amen.

If there are not any beasts in heaven, it would have been more consistent in the translators of the scriptures to have called these Zoa, as they are in the original—*living creatures*. The same remark applies to Rev. iv. 6, 8. It seems not respectable to any of the host in heaven to call them beasts.

CHAPTER VI.

VERSE 14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.

It would seem natural to interpret this vision as showing the final judgment and the end of the world, were it not that viii. 12, 13 represents the sun as yet in the heavens and man on the earth. However, it may be taken as a vision and prediction of the final judgment; and the trumpets may be considered as going over the same ground, chronologically, and giving visions of other scenes and other events.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSE 8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

This arrangement of members of the sentence is faulty, and has occasioned needless embarrassment. It ought to have been arranged thus: And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names were not written from the founda-

tion of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain. Parallel passages sustain this correction. Rev. v. 6, 9, 12; xvii. 8. Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9.

These parallel passages also connect it with the chain of texts that so clearly teach the doctrine of election; so unavoidably teach it that no man can reject it without rejecting the known truth.

The word rendered beast in this passage is not Zoa, living creatures, but Therion, meaning wild beast.

18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast.

Here likewise the original is Therion, meaning wild beast.

Several words have been found whose letters numerically just make the number 666, as Ludovicus, Romuth, and Lateinos. But the word the inspired writer refers to seems best explained by the title which popes have worn in the front of their Tiara—*Vicarius Filius Dei*—vicar of the Son of God, the numerical letters of which make the number.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSE 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.

When the angel professedly undertakes to explain this subject to the apostle, it seems natural to expect that he would do it intelligently, and so as to identify the power intended. His description identifies popery in connection with its civil coadjutor. She sitteth upon many waters, which is emblematical of the many people over which she rules, as shown in verse 15.

The false doctrines which she has fabricated and taught have pleased and intoxicated the nations; and they are called fornicators because they were unfaithful to God and seductive to men. Her names of blasphemy appear in calling bread God; in calling the pope God's vicegerent; in calling the eucharist a sacrifice; in pardoning sins; in putting man's works of supererogation along with Christ's atonement to cancel sins; in getting lost souls out of purgatory by money and masses; making Christ and his work of no account, and by making dead

saints mediators and rivals of the Lord Jesus Christ. If impenitent men have died out of Christ and gone to perdition, can money, priests and masses deliver them? What blasphemy.

Her great wealth refers to the vast gains she has extorted from her deceived votaries.

Her being drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus shows her murderous persecution of the saints by the holy inquisition for hundreds of years before the Reformation stopped their career, showing them that a monk, with God on his side, was stronger than they.

The beast with seven heads and ten horns, representing the seven hills of Rome and the ten kings over whom she ruled, can not be misunderstood.

Her fall has already come. These ten kings over whom she ruled have discarded her scepter. And in 1848 her own people slew the pope's prime minister, and in fear for his life he fled in disguise from Rome, and for six years he remained in exile from Rome until France sent twenty thousand bayonets to protect him from his own people that he might go back to Rome, which, it seems, so hated the whore that twenty-five thousand bayonets were necessary to protect him. And Italy so hated popery that she rebelled against the pope, cast off his government, and made Victor Emmanuel her ruler.

The civil power of popery has been repudiated by all the nations. If popery originated in 606, when the pope became the sovereign of the nations, then his losing that power is his fall. But it can not be shown that it did not originate sooner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSE 4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

When the angel had warned the church of Christ of the corruptions and apostasy of the church as a body, he exhorts those who remained faithful to God to come out of her to escape contamination and judgments. Martin Luther and his pious brethren accepted the invitation and left that apostate body.

Since that time she is nothing more than a dead carcass from

which the soul has departed, and she is left to putridity and corruption. Rev. xviii. 2, 14-21.

If the question be raised whether Babylon symbolizes popery, it may be answered in the affirmative, because it can not be taken literally, for the literal Babylon was destroyed. Dan. v. 30. Ps. xxxvii. 9. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23.

Since the destruction of Babylon mentioned in Daniel, it has never recovered so as to be of any importance, not having ruled over the nations as she does who sits upon many waters, which was once true of Babylon B. C. 538, and in A. D. 606 became true of popery. Compare Jer. li. 6 with Dan. v. 20, 21. Rev. xvii. 18 seems to show that popery is symbolized by Babylon. xvii. 15, 18, 21.

We will find it difficult to point out anything else that so well answers to Babylon that was as popery has answered and does since Babylon fell.

There have been a few inhabitants in literal Babylon—a few Jews—but of no such importance as to make it a great theme of prophecy. See 1 Pet. v. 13. A small church of converted Jews, it seems, was gathered or settled there.

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